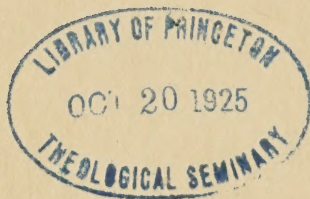


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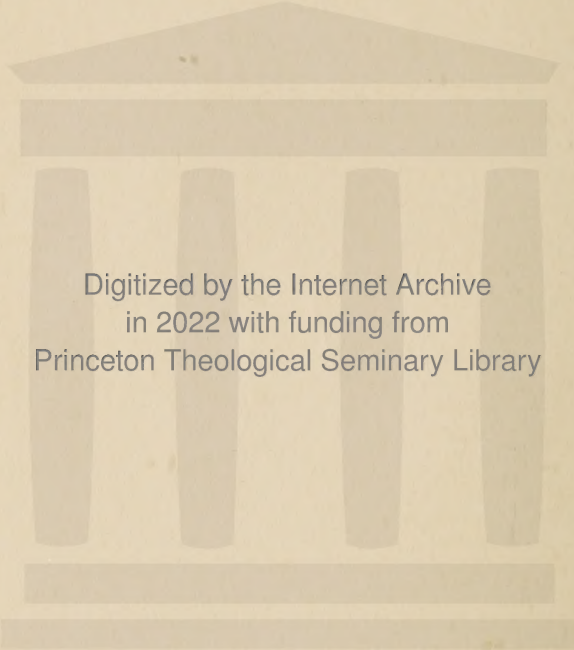
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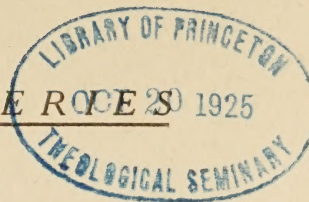
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# FUNDAMENTALISM

*versus*

# MODERNISM

COMPILED BY  
ELDRED C. VANDERLAAN

THE H. W. WILSON COMPANY  
NEW YORK  
1925



Published March 1925  
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## EXPLANATORY NOTE

This book is intended to serve as a source book or introduction to the questions under discussion between the "Modernists" and the "Fundamentalists" in the American Protestant churches. It confines itself to the questions in dispute, and contains almost nothing relating to the outward course of the controversy, interesting as episodes of that story are. The main divisions of the book have been chosen in accordance with the questions most under discussion. For example, no separate division has been devoted to the doctrine of the atonement, nor to the second coming of Christ, because the present discussion has dealt little with these questions, though they are related to the others. The book aims to give a taste of what is being said on both sides of the controversy; though of course, in a collection of extracts and articles, neither side of such questions can be adequately presented. One who wishes to go more thoroughly into the subject should consult the works listed in the bibliography, particularly the historical works under 1 *A*, the Bible dictionaries, the introductions to the Old and New Testaments, etc.

Needless to say, every effort has been made to preserve strict impartiality, both in the introduction by the compiler, and in the selection of material, by giving samples of the best (and also of merely typical) argumentation on both sides. Where a disproportionate space is given to the Modernist side, this is partly because the conservatives are able to state their case more concisely, and also in order to illustrate the variety of the liberal approach.

July, 1924

E. C. VANDERLAAN





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Lake, Kirsopp. The historical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. viii, 291p. Putnam. New York. 1907. London; Williams & Norgate.

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- American Journal of Theology. 20: 333-44. J1. '16. Religious advance in fifty years. W. H. P. Faunce.
- Christian Work. New York. A religious weekly with mild modernist leanings, but prints important sermons and articles on both sides of the controversy.
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- Current Opinion. 76: 209-12. F. '24. Dissension shakes the churches.
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Gospel Witness. (Weekly) Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Can. \$2.00 per year, 5 cents per copy.

Moody Bible Institute Monthly. Chicago.

Nation. 118:53-4. Ja. 16, '24. The shame of the churches. Algernon S. Crapsey.

A severe indictment of both parties in the Protestant Episcopal Church by a social radical, himself once expelled for heresy.

Presbyterian. Philadelphia. A leading fundamentalist weekly.

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Princeton Theological Review. A learned review supporting conservative views.

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Christian Work. 115:346-50. S. 22, '23. The one fundamental. Rev. William P. Merrill, D.D.

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- Christian Work. 116:236-8. F. 23, '24. Christ the one foundation. Henry van Dyke.
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- Christian Work. 116:302-4. Mr. 8, '24. Loyalty to truth. William P. Merrill.
- Christian Work. 116:374-6. Mr. 22, '24. Theology vs. religion. Rev. Charles H. Parkhurst, D.D.
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- Forum. 70:1681-97. Jl. '23. Religion or dogma? Newell Dwight Hillis.
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- Journal of Religion. 2:245-62. My. '22. Can Christianity welcome freedom of teaching? Gerald Birnie Smith.
- Journal of Religion. 2:561-76. N. '22. The modernist movement in the Church of England. The late Cyril W. Emmett of Oxford.
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- Outlook. 136:177-8. Ja. 30, '24. The religion of a liberal Christian. Henry van Dyke.
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- World's Work. 47:418-24. F. '24. Protestantism at the crossroads. William Pierson Merrill.

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Journal of Religion 2:225-35. My. '22. The Kentucky campaign against the teaching of evolution. Alonzo W. Fortune.

Literary Digest. 76 No. 2:31-2. Ja. 13, '23. Shall Moses or Darwin rule Minnesota schools?

Science. n.s. 55:55-61. Ja. 20, '22. Evolutionary faith and modern doubts. William Bateson.

A scientist on the present state of evolutionary theory.

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### *B. Against Evolution*

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See fundamentalist periodicals generally.

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Christian Work. 116:12-14. Ja. 5, '24. The influence of science on Christianity. E. W. Barnes, canon of Westminster Abbey, London.

Homiletic Review. 86:433-7. D. '23. Science and religion. Prof. J. Arthur Thomson.  
Argues that the two cannot conflict.

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A brief account of the evolutionary theory of man's origin by a Christian scientist.

- New York Times. Sunday, Mr. 5, '22: section 7:2.  
 Reply to Mr. Bryan. Henry Fairfield Osborn.
- New York Times. Sunday, Mr. 5, '22: section 7:14.  
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- New York Times. Sunday, Mr. 12, '22: section 7:2, 13.  
 Reply to Mr. Bryan. Harry Emerson Fosdick.  
 Reprinted in Fosdick and Eddy, Science and religion.
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 Vernon Kellogg.

#### VI. THE VIRGIN BIRTH

- American Journal of Theology. 10:1-30. Ja. '06. The  
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 Bacon, A. C. Zenos, Rush Rhees, B. B. Warfield.  
 Prof. Warfield alone answers Yes.
- American Journal of Theology. 12:189-210. Ap. '08.  
 The virgin birth of our Lord. Prof. Charles  
 Augustus Briggs, Union Theological Seminary.  
 A "higher critic" who believed in the virgin birth.
- Christian Century. 41:234-7. F. 21, '24. A woman's  
 view of the virgin birth; a sermon. Maude Royden.  
 Takes the modernist side, but very gently.
- Christian Century. 41:265-7. F. 28, '24. A common-  
 sense view of the virgin birth. William E. Barton.  
 Finds the excitement unnecessary.
- Christian Work. 116:344-5, 352. Mr. 15, '24. The  
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 Williams Anthony, D.D.  
 Takes a careful and moderate position.
- North American Review. 205:93-100. Ja. '17. The vir-  
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 McKim, D.D.  
 A defense.



Outlook. 103:888. Ap. 26, '13. The doctrine of the virgin birth not essential to the preacher.

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A scholarly defense of the doctrine.

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American Journal of Theology. 13:169-92. Ap. '09. The resurrection faith of the first disciples. Shirley Jackson Case.

Constructive Quarterly. 3:159-93. Mr. '15. The fact of the resurrection of Jesus. M. Meinertz.

Hibbert Journal. 2:476-93. Ap. '04. The resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Rev. Canon Hensley Henson, B.D. (later Bishop of Hereford and now Bishop of Durham).

Finds the bodily resurrection and the empty tomb doubtful and unnecessary.

#### VIII. THE POSITION OF MODERNISTS IN ORTHODOX CHURCHES

New Republic. 37:161-2. Ja. 9, '24. The parsons' battle.

World's Work. 47:161-70. D. '23. Is the church dividing? Will the end be two churches, one liberal, the other fundamentalist? R. L. Hartt.

##### *A. Against the Right of the Modernists to Remain*

Christian Work. 114:133-4. F. 3, '24. Bishop Manning's letter to Dr. Grant.

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Christian Work. 116:239-43. F. 23, '24. A message on the present situation in the church. Rt. Rev. William T. Manning, D.D., LL.D., Bishop of New York. *Also* in Churchman, *see* below.

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- Churchman. 129 No. 14: 12-14 Ap. 5, '24. Modernism and morality. Rev. S. C. Hughson, O.H.C.
- See* fundamentalist periodicals generally.

*B. For the Right of the Modernists to Remain*

- Christian Work. 112:716-22. Je. 10, '22. Shall the fundamentalists win? Sermon preached in the First Presbyterian Church, New York. Harry Emerson Fosdick. Printed *also* in *Christian Century*, *also* as a pamphlet.
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- Christian Work. 116:84-5, 95. Ja. 19, '24. An affirmation, designed to safeguard the unity and liberty of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, submitted for the consideration of its ministers and people. Signed by over 150 ministers and professors.
- Christian Work. 116:150-2. F. 2, '24. The faith and the creeds; letter from the faculty of the Episcopal Theological School at Cambridge (Mass.). *Also* in *Churchman*. 129 No. 3: 10-11. Ja. 19, '24.
- Churchman. 129 No. 2: 10-13. Ja. 12, '24. Liberty in faith. Rev. W. Russell Bowie. Sermon preached in Grace Church, New York.

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Independent. 112:5. Ja. 5, '24. Religious tolerance.

New Republic. 38:35-9. Mr. 5, '24. Conscience and the bishops; a historic step. Prof. Dickinson S. Miller, D.D. *Also* in Churchman. 129 No. 11:10-12. Mr. 15, '24.

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Parish News, Church of the Holy Trinity, Brooklyn, N.Y. 28:4-6. Ja. '24. A reply to the bishops' pastoral letter. Rev. John Howard Melish.

Parish News, Church of the Holy Trinity, Brooklyn, N.Y. 28:6. Ja. '24. A statement by the Modern Churchmen's Union.

Presbyterian. 94 No. 3:6-9. Ja. 17, '24. An affirmation of one hundred and fifty liberal ministers.

Contains both the text of the Affirmation and a hostile criticism of it.

World's Work. 45:303-10. Ja. '23. How I lost my job as a preacher. J. D. M. Buckner.

World's Work. 45:509-13. Mr. '23. Freedom in school and church. W. H. P. Faunce.



## INTRODUCTION

The controversy between the Fundamentalists and the Modernists in the Protestant churches presents certain difficulties for the expounder, mainly because the two parties to the debate are not clearly defined. Not all theological conservatism can properly be called fundamentalism. There are those who for themselves hold all the old doctrines, but who do not have the belligerent attitude toward other opinions which marks the group who call themselves Fundamentalists. There is also a large class of Christian leaders who go a little way with the Modernists on questions like the nature and proper use of the Bible, who feel unable to take beliefs like the second coming of Christ with quite the old literalness, who might even admit a measure of errancy in the Bible in unimportant matters, but who stand firm on the old doctrines of the person and work of Christ. It is doubtful whether these can properly be called Modernists. The same men, for instance, may be found on the modernist side when it comes to belief in evolution, but on the conservative side when the question is the virgin birth or the bodily resurrection of Christ. The question is also complicated by the fact that many of the Fundamentalists do not represent the whole group of conservatives in that they are premillennarians (or premillennialists). This is a formidable word, but its meaning can be quite easily made clear. There is much mention in the New Testament of a second coming of Christ to this world, with manifestations of glory in contrast to the lowliness of his first appearance. In the last book of the New Testament, the Apocalypse or Revelation of St. John, there is also reference to a future period of a thousand years when Christ shall reign on this earth and the powers of evil shall be



bound. Now, orthodox interpreters of the Bible have long been divided as to whether the second coming of Christ is to be at the beginning of this millennium, or whether the millennium is to be the conclusion of the gradually developing Kingdom of God in this world, and the visible, glorious coming of Christ is to come at its end to inaugurate the final judgment. It may seem that this is an unimportant difference of opinion, but it has important consequences. The post-millennarian, believing that Christ is to come visibly *after* the thousand years looks for the reign of righteousness to come by degrees, and is, therefore, likely to be intensely interested in making the present world better. Every step in social improvement is to him a step in the coming of the Kingdom of God. The post-millennarian is also likely to take the second coming of Christ somewhat figuratively. The premillennarian, on the other hand, since he expects Christ to come at the beginning of the reign of righteousness on the earth, has little interest in programs of social betterment. The Kingdom of God will not come by any human efforts, but only by the miraculous operation of Christ himself. The present order, therefore, is not something that can be improved according to God's purpose. It is destined to be done away. The mission of the church, then, is not to make the world better, but to save individuals out of the present evil world for that other world which Christ may any day come to inaugurate. Many premillennialists feel justified, on the basis of Scripture predictions, in mapping out detailed programs of the events of the end. All this goes beyond the limits of ordinary theological conservatism, and therefore all conservatives must not be held responsible for the utterances of some of the Fundamentalists.

The term "modernism" is a correct designation. It is true that some of the beliefs rejected by the Modernists have been doubted long before, even in the early centuries of Christian history. But the basis of the present

changes in theology, however much some of them may resemble ancient denials, is what is known as the "modern view of the world." Foremost among the forces that have produced this is modern science, which has given us the concept of "laws of nature," and regards the whole world as an unvarying system of cause and effect. Probably the most revolutionary of all scientific discoveries, in its effect on religious thought, has been the Copernican astronomy, which showed that the earth is not the center of the universe. This has made enormous difficulties for any literal acceptance of the Biblical representations of heaven, earth, and hell. The concept of "laws of nature" has created a state of mind in which any miracle-story has to fight for belief against an atmosphere of incredulity. The theory of evolution, first given an explanation as to its method by Darwin in 1859, but subsequently modified in many details, presents a view of man's origin entirely different from the scheme of special creation, original innocence, and fall, presented in traditional theology and based on the declarations of the Bible. The modern "historical method" of study goes on the assumption that everything that is, has come to be through a process; there is a tendency, therefore, to seek the explanation of everything, even the Hebrew and Christian religions, by a natural development out of earlier forms, which profoundly affects, if it does not destroy, the traditional doctrine of special revelation. The study of other religions has disclosed striking parallels to many beliefs once thought peculiar to Judaism and Christianity; and the question inevitably arises, whether it can be that the Biblical stories, like their parallels in other religions, are to some extent legendary or mythological. Finally, in the nineteenth century a school of literary critics arose whose studies of the Bible have led to revolutionary results. Many books of the Bible have been declared, on internal evidence, to have a much later origin than formerly supposed, to have other than their supposed

authors, to be compiled out of earlier and sometimes inconsistent documents, and consequently to be not throughout reliable history. All these tendencies are essentially modern, and therefore the theology that is affected by them is properly called "modernism."

To all these modern tendencies there has been, in Christian theology, a twofold attitude. On the one hand, there are those who regard the new ways of thinking as discoveries of truth, and hold that Christian belief must be adjusted to them. This is possible, the Modernists hold, for the new ways of regarding nature and history do not necessarily mean the elimination of the activity of God. When the scientist denies God he is no longer a scientist, but a philosopher, and the Christian can refuse to follow him though accepting his scientific facts. The modern views modify the outer forms of Christian beliefs, but leave their inner substance unharmed, or even strengthened.

The modernist theology has, of course, many varieties. Some insist that there is no one theology called "modernism." Some religious liberals retain almost the whole system of doctrines in a qualified form. Others are ready for a drastic discarding of the whole traditional "religion *about* Jesus" in favor of a return to "the religion *of* Jesus," which, it is believed, is shown by a critical study of the earliest traditions to have been essentially "the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man," with a "plan of salvation" as simple as the parable of the Prodigal Son. Most Modernists protest that they are not Unitarians. (The Unitarians have for long frankly regarded Jesus as a human teacher and leader, not in any unique sense divine). In some cases the distinction is real; in others, it can perhaps be traced but is very fine and quite unimportant. Many persons were amused at the embarrassment of certain Modernists in New York when a Unitarian minister came forward as a defender of modernism against a leading Fundamentalist. But all

Modernists agree upon the necessity of revising religious beliefs in the light of the new knowledge.

On the other hand, other theologians have regarded the whole system of modern ideas as destructive of Christianity. It is not new facts, they believe, to which the Modernists have yielded, but an atheistic philosophy. It is a modern prejudice against the miraculous and the supernatural, which, if the Modernist were but clear-sighted enough to see it, really springs from a disbelief in God. The Copernican astronomy, to be sure, has long since been assimilated and the Bible interpreted in accordance with it. But evolution is denied as unproved, a mere atheistic guess. The whole critical reconstruction of Biblical history is rejected as untenable, and the Bible set forth over against modernism as wholly without error. Sometimes modernism is said to spring from a moral fault. The desire to revise theology is said to issue from man's unwillingness to think of himself as a lost sinner who needs a Divine Savior.

### THE BIBLE

Most important of all, in this discussion, is the question of the nature and proper use of the Bible. For centuries it has been commonly assumed by Christians that the Bible is in such a sense a revelation from God,—that its authors were in such a way inspired—that whatever the Bible declares is to be accepted as truth without question. The Reformers of the sixteenth century showed a certain tendency at first to deal more boldly with the Bible, but the necessities of controversy with the Roman Church, which they had left, soon led the Protestants to develop an even stricter doctrine of Biblical inspiration than was necessary in Catholicism. When, as is often pointed out, the authors of the Westminster Confession of 1647 failed to state explicitly that the Bible is without error, the reason is probably that this was so completely

taken for granted that it occurred to none of them to declare it.

Now, even many moderate conservatives will agree that the theory of verbal inspiration is not tenable. The credibility of the Bible, such men hold, is not affected by trifling discrepancies of detail or occasional misquotations. Still other conservatives give up entirely the attempt to draw authoritative statements from the Bible on any subject but religion and ethics. These, they say, are the true subject matter of the Bible, and it is in these fields only that the Bible is an authoritative revelation.

But the genuine Modernist goes further than this. He maintains that the Bible does not teach a single, harmonious system of doctrine, but contains various theologies of unequal value. The primitive representations of the early Hebrew traditions, the ethical religion of the great prophets, the religion of temple and sacrifice, the teachings of Jesus, the elaborate theology of Paul, the Christ shown in the fourth Gospel, the peculiar theology of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the visions of the Apocalypse of John—it is impossible, say the Modernists, to combine all these into one system of doctrine without doing violence to some of them. The Bible is a varied literature issuing out of the long development of Hebrew and Christian religion. It is not adapted to be a final authority for our belief, in the sense that all its declarations must be accepted without question; but its true value is found when it is used like any other literature, for whatever inspiration and guidance its various parts are found actually to contain. The Bible becomes a more wonderful book when so used, the Modernist claims. Old attacks like that of Robert Ingersoll lose all point the moment the Christian is not required to defend everything said about God in the Old Testament. No longer is it necessary to expend labor upon harmonizing the hopelessly discordant, in the interest of an artificial theory of Biblical inerrancy. On the contrary, the Bible as rear-



ranged by modern literary and historical criticism presents an impressive picture of the development of religion from naive, grotesque, and barbarous forms up to the matchless teachings and life of Jesus, a picture so impressive as to call forth a faith in a self-revealing God within the process.

To all this the Fundamentalist replies, that the Bible does not gain from the new view, but on the contrary loses all the value that Christian faith found in it on the old view. As represented by the Modernists, it is simply a human literature. Instead of a message from God to men, it is only men's thoughts about God. In a word, the Bible is no more a revelation. Since the Bible is declared to contain error, it is only our fallible judgment which decides what in the Bible is true. But what religion needs is an infallible message from God, to which our human reason and conscience shall be subject, which may on occasion contradict human ideas. If it is to have any value, therefore, the Bible must be supernaturally inspired and infallible. The true Fundamentalist draws the full conclusions from this principle. It is not enough that the thoughts of the Bible be divinely given, for thoughts are communicated in words, and an error in a word might conceal the Divine thought. Therefore it must be that the very words of Scripture are just what God intended the writers to use.

Being thus convinced of the antecedent necessity of an infallible Bible, the Fundamentalist then examines the evidence which the Modernist offers against it, and finds that the Modernist's case is not proved. The supposed discoveries of the literary critic are declared to be largely subjective. The critic, it is charged, rewrites the sacred history according to a preconceived theory of the evolution of religions. He is unwilling to admit the possibility of a supernatural revelation and of miraculous events accompanying it, and therefore must recast the story so as to remove these features. The inconsistencies and varia-

tions of style, on the ground of which the critic divides books of the Bible into supposed earlier documents, are declared to be mostly imaginary. Where actual discrepancies occur, these are disposed of by an interpretation which harmonizes them, or the Fundamentalist waits for further light which shall remove them. There is always the possibility that the difficulty is due to an error in transcribing the manuscripts, and therefore it is the *original documents* only for which verbal inerrancy is claimed. These are, to be sure, lost, but a comparison of manuscripts enables us to reconstruct the original text with a considerable degree of accuracy.

### EVOLUTION

The inerrancy of the Bible comes conspicuously into question in connection with the creation of the world and the origin of man. The modern theory of evolution is in striking contrast with the Biblical representation of a series of special acts of creation. More serious still is the contrast between the evolutionary view of the origin of society, morals, and religion, and the Biblical story, according to which the present state of man is to be explained by a fall of our first parents from the state of original innocence in which they had been created.

Modernists, and many who are otherwise theologically conservative, give general assent to the theory of evolution. The argument for it they usually leave to the biologists, geologists, and palaeontologists, discussing on their own part rather the question how evolution affects theology. That it does modify the traditional system of doctrines is freely admitted, but the Modernist argues that the story of evolution furnishes a new evidence for the existence of God, better than the old argument from design. Evolution is said to give relief in many old difficulties. It sheds a little light upon the mystery of evil, in that it represents the world as still in process of com-

pletion. It relieves the difficulty caused by the atrocities alleged to have been commanded by God in the Old Testament; for these are seen to have been the promptings of an undeveloped moral sense.

For the Fundamentalist, the theory of evolution tends to become the great enemy. First of all, it contradicts the Bible. It is not merely that it contradicts the first chapters of Genesis; but it is felt to destroy that whole system of doctrine built on the fall of Adam and Eve, a system which the Fundamentalist holds to be taught throughout the Bible. No fall, no real problem of sin; no sin, no need of salvation; no salvation, no Divine Redeemer; and so no Christianity. The doctrine of the animal ancestry of man is held to be degrading, to make man not truly a child of God. If sin is only the remains of the ape and tiger in us, it seems less serious, certainly less guilty. So with might and main the Fundamentalist bestirs himself to show that evolution is unproved.

#### THE VIRGIN BIRTH AND THE BODILY RESURRECTION

In the present controversy not much is being said about miracles in general. The Modernist naturally is inhospitable to miracles. For the Fundamentalist, this whole question is already settled by his doctrine about the Bible. The Bible relates that a series of marvelous events took place in Egypt, Palestine, and elsewhere, and for him who holds the Bible to be reliable throughout, there is nothing more to say. The controversy centers rather in two great miracles, *viz.*, the alleged fact that Jesus was miraculously conceived by the Virgin Mary, and had no human father, and the alleged fact that Jesus rose from the dead in the same body in which he was crucified, and that his tomb was found empty. At this point the strict Fundamentalist is joined by many who do not hold his view of Biblical inerrancy. Many a Christian who finds it necessary to treat the book of Jonah as an allegory, and who is not quite sure about the conversational powers of Balaam's ass, grows

frightened when it is proposed to treat these supposed events in the life of Jesus, the virgin birth and the bodily resurrection, as legendary. For these two miracles seem far more closely connected with the very substance of Christianity than any Old Testament miracle, or even than any other miracle related of Jesus.

If the virgin birth should prove to be a legend, there seems to be no escape from a considerable modification of the traditional doctrine about Christ. Although the Modernists always protest that the precise manner of the birth of Jesus makes no difference, the conservative observes that practically without exception, those who reject the miraculous conception of Jesus no longer think of him as a pre-existent divine being who "took on human nature" from his mother, but instead regard him as *a man* in whom God dwelt in a peculiar degree. And this, the conservative feels, no matter how much the Modernist may speak of the "divinity" or even "deity" of Christ, is nothing but Unitarianism.

At the risk of seeming to take sides, one argument of the Fundamentalists must be stigmatized as unfounded and unfair. Orthodox hearers are often stirred to a high pitch of indignation by the charge that if one does not believe in the virgin birth he must believe that Jesus was "the illegitimate son of an impure woman." The whole vocabulary of abusive Anglo-Saxon terms is used in enforcing this sensational charge. Nothing could be more absurd or inexcusable. Nobody could arrive at the supposition that Jesus was born out of wedlock except on the basis of those very birth-stories which the Modernist takes to be legendary. But if the birth-stories are legendary, then we have no historical account of the birth of Jesus; and the only supposition for which there is any ground in that case, is that Jesus was born in marriage, at Nazareth.

As noted above, the Modernist claims that nothing vital is bound up with this story. The reasons which

move him to doubt it will be seen in the extracts given in Part IV of this book.

If the story of the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the tomb be doubted, the conservative Christian feels deprived of the supreme sign given by God of the truth of Christianity. He says with the Apostle Paul, "If Christ be not risen, then is our faith vain." Christianity seems then to be founded upon a delusion. The Modernist, on the other hand, is unable to understand this insistence upon the *bodily* resurrection. He believes in the continued life of Jesus as a present power in the lives of his followers, and often believes that the resurrection faith of the first disciples was not subjective but actually caused by physical visions produced by the spirit of Jesus after his death. But he cannot see that anything depends on what became of the *body* of Jesus. He usually finds that the earlier resurrection faith, as seen in Paul, requires no bodily resurrection, but that the stories in the Gospels are a later and more materialized form of the tradition.

#### SHOULD THE MODERNISTS LEAVE THE ORTHODOX CHURCHES?

This is a separate question, apart from that of the rightness or wrongness of the Modernists' views. In the Congregational churches, where there are no creedal requirements of any kind, liberal views have long been welcomed. In the Baptist churches, on the other hand, where theoretically there is the same liberty, one finds a strong determination on the part of the Fundamentalist group to drive the Modernists out. The problem becomes peculiarly acute in churches which require of their ministers assent to a formulated creed, *e.g.*, the Presbyterian Church which professes allegiance to the Westminster Confession of 1647, and the Church of England and its allied Protestant Episcopal Church in America, which not only require assent to the Apostles' and Nicene



Creeds, but in every regular service of worship require the reciting of one of them. By what right does a Modernist remain a Presbyterian minister when any informed person can point out the discrepancies between his views and the statements of the Confession? And how can an honest man Sunday after Sunday, in the presence of a congregation and of God, recite creeds which say "I believe" when in fact he does not believe?

The Fundamentalist has the advantage here. His case can be put in a few words, and carries with it an air of obviousness which is very difficult to escape. The Unitarian, long a lonely defender of heretical views, frequently joins in accusations against the Modernist who will not come out of the orthodox church and join his true allies. The Modernist is thus under the charge of dishonesty from both sides.

His case is not so easy to state in a few words. He recognizes that he is technically in a false position. But he feels himself in a deeper sense in such a vital connection with the tradition of his church, that to step out would be even more false to his principles than to stay in. He believes that the process of subdividing Protestantism according to variations in doctrine must come to an end. He believes himself in possession of new truth to which the church should adjust itself. The position of the strict conformist, carried to its logical end, would mean that at the appearance of each new truth or fresh insight not in accordance with previous formulations, all existing churches would have to disband and reorganize with fresh doctrinal standards, which is absurd. The solution for the time being is, that it be generally understood that assent to the creeds means only assent to the central truth contained in them, or to the Christian religion in general; and as soon as it becomes possible, the churches shall either formulate new doctrinal standards, or keep the old creeds but disavow servitude to them. The Modernist, then, usually admits that he is technically

out of accord with the doctrines of his church, but holds that it is practically necessary that such deviation from orthodoxy be tolerated. The church must not be allowed to destroy itself by a literal adherence to the formulations of the past. For the present, the apparent false position must be persisted in as the lesser of two evils.

In the fight against "modern unbelief," old differences are for the time forgotten. Baptists and Presbyterians stand side by side in the effort to rid their churches of the common enemy. In this strange alliance the Episcopal bishops and the tent evangelists find themselves together. Scholarly conservatives of Princeton Theological Seminary align themselves with men from the Bible Institutes whose audacious charting of future events they regard as folly. And on the other side, a moderately conservative theologian like Henry van Dyke finds himself under like condemnation with Professor Kirsopp Lake and the late George Burman Foster. At the time of writing, the controversy shows no signs of subsiding. The annual ecclesiastical assemblies of 1922 and 1923 brought no victory for either side, and it is still possible that those are right who predict a transverse division of Protestantism into two great churches, one orthodox and the other liberal.

E. C. VANDERLAAN

July, 1924



Part I  
GENERAL DISCUSSION





## A. HISTORIC AND RECENT CREEDS

### THE APOSTLES' CREED <sup>1</sup>

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell [or, the place of departed spirits]; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; The Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body; And the Life everlasting. Amen.

### THE NICENE CREED <sup>1</sup>

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by Whom all things were made; Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary,

<sup>1</sup> It is admitted by all that neither of these two ancient creeds is accurately named. The Apostles did not write the former, nor is the latter the creed adopted by the Council of Nicaea, though it closely resembles it.

and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered, and was buried; and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And He shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spake by the Prophets.

And one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins; and we look for the Resurrection of the dead, and the Life of the world to come. Amen.

## SELECTED PASSAGES FROM THE WESTMINSTER CONFSSION<sup>1</sup>

### CHAPTER I

#### OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE

IV. The authority of the holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the Author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the word of God.

V. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem of the holy Scripture; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evi-

<sup>1</sup> From Philip Schaff. *The Creeds of Christendom*. Vol. III, p. 600.

dence itself to be the Word of God; yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

VIII. The Old Testament in Hebrew . . . and the New Testament in Greek . . . , being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic; so as in all controversies of religion the Church is finally to appeal unto them. . . .

IX. The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly.

X. The Supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.

## CHAPTER VI

### OF THE FALL OF MAN, OF SIN, AND OF THE PUNISHMENT THEREOF

I. Our first parents, being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to his own glory.

II. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.

III. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation.

IV. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.

## CHAPTER VIII

### OF CHRIST, THE MEDIATOR

II. The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin: being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man.

IV. This office of a mediator and surety the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake, which, that he might discharge, he was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfil it; endured most grievous torments immediately in his soul, and most painful sufferings in his body; was crucified and died; was buried, and remained under the power of death, yet saw no corruption. On the third day he arose from the dead, with the same body in which he suffered; with which also he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of his Father, making intercession; and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world.

THE FAMOUS "FIVE POINTS"<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, the General Assembly calls the attention of the Presbyteries to the deliverance of the General Assembly of 1910, which deliverance is hereby affirmed and which is as follows:

1. It is an essential doctrine of the Word of God and our standards that the Holy Spirit did so inspire, guide and move the writers of the Holy Scripture as to keep them from error.

2. It is an essential doctrine of the Word of God and our standards that our Lord Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary.

3. It is an essential doctrine of the Word of God and our standards that Christ offered up Himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and to reconcile us to God.

4. It is an essential doctrine of the Word of God and of our standards concerning our Lord Jesus Christ that on the third day He rose again from the dead with the same body with which He suffered, with which also He ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of His Father, making intercession.

5. It is an essential doctrine of the Word of God as the supreme standard of our faith that our Lord Jesus showed His power and love by working mighty miracles. This working was not contrary to nature, but superior to it.

THE CREED OF THE BAPTIST BIBLE UNION<sup>2</sup>

Whereas: The Northern Baptist Convention, in its 1922 session, held at Indianapolis, officially declared the New Testament to be the all-sufficient ground of its faith, and

<sup>1</sup> Readopted by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, in 1923.

<sup>2</sup> Christian Work. 116:702. May 31, 1924.



Whereas: There is a wide difference of opinion among our Baptist people, as to what the New Testament does teach,

Therefore: Be it resolved that the Bible teaches, and we believe,

### 1. OF THE SCRIPTURES

That the Bible was written by men supernaturally inspired; that it has truth without any admixture of error for its matter; that, as originally written, it is both scientifically and historically true and correct; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the age, the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to man; the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions should be tried.

### 2. OF THE TRUE GOD

That there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is Jehovah, the maker and supreme ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.

### 3. OF THE CREATION

That the Genesis account of creation is to be accepted literally, and not allegorically or figuratively; that man was created directly in God's own image and after His own likeness; that man's creation was not a matter of evolution or evolutionary change of species, or development through interminable periods of time from lower to higher forms; that both animal and vegetable life was

made directly, and God's established law was they should bring forth only "after their kind."

#### 4. OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH

That Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Ghost in a miraculous manner; born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever born or can be born of woman, and that He is both the Son of God, and God, the Son.

#### 5. OF THE ATONEMENT FOR SIN

That the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the Mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who by the appointment of the Father freely took upon Him our nature, yet without sin, honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins; that his atonement consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was the voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the Just dying for the unjust, Christ, the Lord, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; that having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in Heaven and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection. He is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate and an all-sufficient Saviour.

#### 6. OF GRACE IN THE NEW CREATION

That in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in the new birth the one dead in trespass and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension, not by culture, not by character, nor by the will of man,

but wholly and solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with the divine truth so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life.

## 7. OF THE CHURCH

That a church of Christ is a congregation of immersed believers associated by a covenant of faith and fellowship of the Gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges invested in them by His word; that its officers of ordination are pastors, elders and deacons, whose qualifications, claims and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures. We believe the true mission of the church is found in the great commission; first, to make individual disciples; second, to build up the church; third, to teach and instruct as He has commanded. We do not believe in the reversal of this order; we hold that the local church has the absolute right of self-government, free from interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; and that the one and only superintendent is Christ, through the Holy Spirit; that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the Gospel; that every church is the sole and only judge of the measure and method of its cooperation; on all matters of membership, of policy, of government, of discipline, of benevolence, the will of the local church is final.

## 8. OF THE ORDINANCES

That Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost; to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen

Saviour, with its effect in our death to sin, and resurrection to a new life; that it is pre-requisite to the privileges of a church relation and to the Lord's Supper; in which the members of the church, by the sacred use of bread and wine are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination.

## 9. OF THE RESURRECTION AND OF THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

We believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ; that He ascended to the right hand of the majesty on high; that as our high priest He is Mediator between God and man; and that He will return "in like manner" literally, personally and bodily, back to the earth.

## PART OF THE OFFICIAL CREED OF A DENOMINATIONAL COLLEGE<sup>1</sup>

We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as verbally inspired by God, and inerrant in the original writings; and that there is no difference in kind in the inspiration of the books of the Bible. We reject the notion that just the thoughts and not the words of Bible writers are inspired of God, and believe that the Scriptures are of supreme and final authority in faith and practice.

We believe in the immediate creation of man by Almighty God, rather than in his mediate creation. We therefore utterly reject the anti-Biblical and unscientific doctrine of evolution, whether it be theistic, atheistic, materialistic, or any other form whatever.

We believe that the first and second chapters of Genesis, which include the account of the making of Eve from Adam's rib, are historically correct and scientific.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by A. Wakefield Slaten, in *Academic Freedom, Fundamentalism, and the Dotted Line*. Educational Review, 63: 74-7. February, 1923.

ally accurate. We reject utterly the mythical interpretation of these chapters.

We believe that Adam and Eve were the first created human beings in the entire history of the world, and that all nations, kindred and tongues had their origin in their loins.

We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in His ascension into heaven, and in His present life there for us as High Priest and Advocate, and in the personal return of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, to earth.

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved, and the everlasting conscious punishment of the lost.

### THE KANSAS CITY CREED OF THE CONGREGATIONALISTS <sup>1</sup>

We believe in God the Father, infinite in wisdom, goodness and love; and in Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord and Saviour, who for us and our salvation lived and died and rose again and liveth evermore; and in the Holy Spirit, who taketh of the things of Christ and revealeth them to us, renewing, comforting and inspiring the souls of men. We are united in striving to know the will of God as taught in the Holy Scriptures, and in our purpose to walk in the ways of the Lord, made known or to be made known to us. We hold it to be the mission of the Church of Christ to proclaim the gospel to all mankind, exalting the worship of the one true God, and laboring for the progress of knowledge, the promotion of justice, the reign of peace and the realization of human brotherhood. Depending, as did our fathers,

<sup>1</sup> Adopted by the National Council of the Congregational Churches at Kansas City, October 25, 1913. From Barton, *Congregational Creeds and Covenants*, p. 204-5. This creed is interesting in that, while it seeks to preserve a general allegiance to the Christian tradition, it further gives expression to the newer social ideals which are a vital part of the religion of many modern Christians.



upon the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth, we work and pray for the transformation of the world into the kingdom of God; and we look with faith for the triumph of righteousness and the life everlasting.



## B. BRIEF STATEMENTS ABOUT THE PRESENT CONTROVERSY<sup>1</sup>

DR. HERBERT L. WILLETT, OF CHICAGO

The fundamental doctrines of the Church are not the verbal inspiration of the Bible, the virgin birth of Jesus, any particular theory of the atonement, or a literalistic formula of the return of the Lord. These might all be true and yet not essential. The basic truths of the Christian faith are the reality and fatherhood of God, the divinity and saviorhood of Jesus, the efficacy of the atonement for sin, the vitality and value of the church as the instrument for the accomplishment of the divine purpose in the world, and the life eternal. And these all go back to the central belief in the Master Himself, the one requisite article in the primal creed of the Church.

DR. JOHN ARCHIBALD MACCALLUM, OF PHILADELPHIA

The Church must seek the truth and teach that the one fundamental of Christianity is a Christ-like mind and heart. They alone do honor to Christ who have that mind. He calls upon men to follow Him, not to define Him. They honor the Bible who seek to live in accordance with its precepts rather than those who make claims for it that it never makes for itself. The spirit exhibited by the heresy hunter in every age is sufficient to prove that he has not learned Christ aright. The Modernist is never a heresy hunter.

DR. CLARENCE E. MACARTNEY, OF PHILADELPHIA

The great revolt within the Protestant Church today is a revolt against those who have ignored or denied the

<sup>1</sup> Homiletic Review. 86: 186-90. September, 1923. The Battle Within the Churches; Fundamentalism vs. Liberalism.

Christ of the New Testament. It is not a quarrel over science, nor a dispute over theories of the second advent. It is a mighty and a righteous protest against a preaching which dishonors Jesus and would rob mankind of its alone hope.

REV. MURRAY SHIPLEY HOWLAND, PRESBYTERIAN, OF  
BUFFALO

The attitude of the Fundamentalists, instead of being Scriptural, as they claim, is directly contrary to the teachings both of Christ and Saint Paul. Christ attacked the literalism of the Pharisees who taught the inspired authority of every word of the law and the prophets. Saint Paul declared that the letter killeth—the spirit giveth life. . . .

What the world needs is the message that Christ came to give: 1. The fatherhood of God; 2. the brotherhood of man; 3. the indwelling life of Christ; 4. the law of sacrificial service; 5. the coming of the kingdom of God and of right; and not discussions as to an inerant Bible and the virgin birth.

PROF. SAMUEL MCCOMB, OF THE EPISCOPAL THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL, CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

We need a drastic and far-reaching reformation, more thorough-going than that of the sixteenth century, if religion and the Church are to survive.

DR. JOHN A. RICE, OF TULSA, OKLAHOMA

Two antagonistic world-views are involved. To the one the world is a crystal, to the other a stream; to the one a fixed finality, to the other an eternal process. To the one, Christianity is a static thing of the first century; to the other, a growing thing evolving the life that was involved in Jesus Christ.

## C. FOR THE FUNDAMENTALISTS

### WHAT IS A FUNDAMENTALIST?<sup>1</sup>

. . . They have certain great convictions in common, however, that divide them somewhat sharply from the Modernists. Some of the more relevant of these may be mentioned. They hold that Christianity is a particular religion, specifically different from all other religions, that it received its specific content once and for all from Christ and his apostles, and that this content has received authoritative expression in the New Testament. Still further, they hold that the great historic facts recorded in the New Testament, such as the death and resurrection of Christ, and the interpretation of these facts which it contains, are equally constituent elements of this content. Apart from these facts there would be no Christianity, but give the facts an interpretation other than that of the New Testament, and they do not give us Christianity. For the Fundamentalist, the doctrines of the New Testament are not merely explanation of certain great facts suitable to the intelligence of the first century; still less are they merely the intellectual expression of the religious experiences of the early Christians; they are explanations of facts valid for all time. And since they hold to the supernaturalism of the New Testament, they see in Christianity not merely one stage in the religious development of mankind, but the final and absolute religion. They hold that the religion of the New Testament is a unitary phenomenon, and that the attempts of Modernists by means of literary and historical criticism to get back of the Christianity of the New Testament to a more primitive Christianity have ended in failure, that

<sup>1</sup> From Presbyterian. 94. No. 4: 3-4. January 24, 1924.



a sounder scholarship has shown that the Christianity of Paul is one with the Christianity of the primitive disciples, and the Christianity of the primitive disciples one with that commended by Jesus Himself.

### MR. BRYAN ON THE "FIVE POINTS"<sup>1</sup>

The first proposition deals with the doctrine that necessarily comes first, namely, the inerrancy of the Bible. It is declared to be not only true, but "an essential doctrine of the Word of God and our standards, that the Holy Spirit did so inspire, guide and move the writers of Holy Scripture as to keep them from error."

The Bible is either the Word of God or merely a man-made book. If time permitted, I might defend the Christian position and point out as conclusive proof of the Bible's divine origin the fact that the wisest men living today, with an inheritance of all the learning of the past, with countless books to consult and great universities on every hand, cannot furnish the equal of, or a substitute for, this book which was compiled from the writings of men largely unlettered, scattered through many centuries and yet producing an unbroken story—men of a single race and living in a limited area, without the advantages of swift ships or telegraph wires. Why is it that we have made progress along other lines and yet have made no progress in the "Science of How to Love"<sup>2</sup> the one science of which the Bible treats? We go back to the Bible for the foundation of our statute law and find that Moses compressed into a few sentences what the learned lawyers of the present day spread over volumes. We find in the Bible also the rules that govern our spiritual development and a moral code the like of which the world had never seen before and to which no improvements have been added throughout the centuries. Shall we accept the Bible as a book by inspiration given

<sup>1</sup> See p. 21. From his article on The Fundamentals. Forum. 70: 1665-80. July, 1923.

<sup>2</sup> *Sic*. Probably should read "Live."

or conclude that civilization has so dragged us down that educated men of today cannot do that which was done then by men without the aid of schools? My purpose, however, is not to enter into an extended defense of the Bible but rather to point out that it must either be accepted as the revealed will of God or be dethroned and brought down to the level of the works of men.

When one asserts that the Bible is not infallible, he must measure it by some standard which he considers better authority than the Bible itself. If the Bible is to be rejected as an authority, upon whose authority is it to be condemned? We must have a standard, where shall we find it? When one decides that the Bible is, as a whole or in part, erroneous, he sits in judgment upon it and, looking down from his own infallibility, declares it fallible—that is, that it contains falsehoods or errors. As no two of the critics of the Bible fully agree as to what part is myth and what part is authentic history, each one, in fact, transfers the presumption of infallibility from the Bible to himself.

Upon the first proposition all the rest depend. If the Bible is true—that is, so divinely inspired as to be free from error—then the second, third, fourth and fifth propositions follow inevitably, because they are based upon what the Bible actually says in language clear and unmistakable. If, on the other hand, the Bible is not to be accepted as true, there is no reason why anybody should believe anything in it that he objects to, no matter upon what his objection is founded. He need not go to the trouble of giving a reason for it; if he is at liberty to eliminate any passage which he does not like, then no reason is necessary. When the Bible ceases to be an authority—a divine authority—the Word of God can be accepted, rejected, or mutilated, according to the whim or mood of the reader.

The second proposition which declares it to be “an essential doctrine of the Word of God and our standards

that our Lord Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary" is really the pivotal point in the present controversy between the so-called liberals and those who are described as conservatives. The action of the General Assembly has so exasperated a number of Presbyterian preachers that they have openly declared that they do not believe in the virgin birth. Why? Because there is any uncertainty in the record of the Saviour's birth as given in Matthew and Luke? No, the account is written in simple language and in detail. Mary was the first one to inquire whether such a birth was possible. The atheists, the agnostics, the infidels, and the doubters, were all anticipated by the Virgin herself. It is fortunate that the question was asked, because the answer to a question is more impressive than a statement which is not drawn out by a question. Luke, being a physician, was in the habit of dealing with childbirth. Who could more fittingly describe this event so important to the world?

Critics say that the virgin birth is only mentioned twice, once in the Gospel of Matthew and once in the Gospel of Luke, but to be entirely fair they ought to explain that no other Bible writers mention Christ's birth. The virgin birth is not *contradicted* by any Bible writer, and nearly every writer in the Bible records miracles or supernatural manifestations just as mysterious as the virgin birth. 6

The virgin birth is no more mysterious than the birth of each of us—it is simply different. No one without revelation has ever solved the mystery of life, whether it be the life found in man, or in the beast or in the plant. The God who can give life can certainly give it in any way or through any means that may please Him. It was just as easy for God to bring Christ into the world as He did, according to Matthew and Luke, as to bring us into the world as He did. Shall we doubt the *power* of God? If so, we do not believe in God. Or, relying upon our own wisdom, shall we deny that God would

*want* to do what He is reported to have done? Who dares to make himself equal in wisdom with God—as one must be if he knows, without possibility of mistake, what God would or would not do?

If Christ came down from the Father for the purpose of saving the people from their sins, is it unreasonable that His birth should have been different from the birth of others?

The task that Christ came to perform was more than a man's task. No man aspiring to be a God could have done what He did; it required a God condescending to be a man. Is it unreasonable that one who offered Himself as a sacrifice for sin, revealed God to man, and guides man by His heaven-born wisdom, should have been conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary? The rejection of the virgin birth not only condemns the Bible record on this subject as false but it changes one's whole conception of Christ and makes it difficult, if not impossible, to present Him as the Bible presents Him.

Those who refuse to believe in the virgin birth must account for Christ's birth in some other way. It is fair to say that most of them regard Jesus as the son of Joseph, conceived in lawful wedlock, unless they prefer to regard Him as the illegitimate child of an immoral woman. We would do them no injustice if we called them by some name that would distinguish them from Christians who accept the Bible as true and who believe that Christ was born as Matthew and Luke record.

The so-called liberals seem to think Christians intolerant when they refuse to count those worthy to bear the name of Christians who thus degrade the Son of God and Saviour of the world. Having adjusted themselves to the human theory, they cannot understand why it should shock Christians. As a matter of fact, the liberals are as dogmatic as the conservatives; they call the latter "unintelligent" and "ignorant" and assert—and they be-

lieve it—that “thinking” people will not join the church unless it allows the Bible to be so modified as to conform to what they call “the results of modern scientific research.” The conservatives reply, first, that they have no right to change the Bible; second, that Christianity is intended for *all*, not for the so-called “thinkers” only. The common people who heard Christ gladly have never heard gladly those who would substitute Darwin’s guess for the Mosaic record of creation; and, third, that the pure and simple Gospel makes a stronger appeal, than a denatured gospel, to the intellectual as well as the masses. In support of this they cite the fact that the churches that have adopted what they call the “scientific interpretation of the Bible” have not appealed to any large percentage of the educated and not at all to the average man, whereas the Bible, taken literally, has found followers in every land, among every race and language, among the rich and poor, among the educated and the uneducated. The Bible, as written, speaks a universal language and makes its appeal to the heart of mankind, everywhere. Christianity, being a religion, is built upon the heart, as all religions are; it would cease to be a religion if it appealed to the intellect alone.

What progress can Christianity hope to make if it proclaims to the world that the Bible is full of error and that Jesus was but a man? Have not those who believe Christ to be the hope of the world and His plan of salvation the only plan that can raise man to the exalted place for which God intended him, have not such Christians a right to protest against what they believe to be a death-blow to Christianity? . . .

But to return to the five points. The third proposition deals with the sacrificial character of the death of Christ. Those who reject the virgin birth quite naturally and for the same reason reject the doctrine of the atonement. They deny that man ever fell; on the contrary, they contend that man has been rising from the beginning



and, therefore, needs no Saviour. To such, Christ is just an example, differing in value to different individuals according to the estimate that they place upon His wisdom. Those who reject the atonement and simply search Christ's teachings for advice (if at any time they feel they need His advice) describe the Nazarene in different ways. Some say that He was the most perfect man known to history; others say that He was a man of extraordinary merit; still others believe him an unusual man for His time; while some would simply put the title "Mr." before His name and class Him among the well-meaning visionaries. To those who strip Christ of His deity, He can mean but little. If they will only take Him out of the *man* class and put Him in the *God* class all that the Bible says of Him will be easily understood and gladly accepted.

It is hardly necessary to point out that the rejection of the atonement eliminates the element that has made Christianity a missionary force. In proportion as men reject the doctrine of the atonement their interest in the spread of the gospel is paralyzed. Why cross stormy oceans and endure continuing sacrifices upon the frontiers of the world if mankind does not need a Saviour and Christ was but an ordinary human being? Those who admire and follow uninspired philosophers form literary clubs but not churches; and they send out few—if any—missionaries. Christ founded a spiritual kingdom—thousands of millions have gloried in His name—and millions have suffered death rather than surrender the faith that He implanted in their hearts; and this faith is living still, "in spite of dungeons, fire, and sword."

The fourth proposition, like the second and third, stands or falls with the first. The only information that we have regarding the bodily resurrection of Christ is found in the Bible and the only reason for rejecting it is the same given for the rejection of the virgin birth and the doctrine of the atonement, namely, that it is *different*

from anything else known among men. The resurrection of Christ—the bodily resurrection—is declared in the General Assembly pronouncement to be not only true, but an *essential* doctrine. “If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain,” exclaims the great apostle, Paul. The denial of Christ’s resurrection, taken in connection with the denial of the virgin birth and the denial of the atonement, completes His degradation. Take away conception by the Holy Ghost, the honor of a divine mission, and the resurrection, and Christ ceases to be a character of importance. He claimed to be the Son of God; He claimed that He came to save man; He met death with the calm assurance that His blood would cleanse from sin all who accepted His salvation. If He can be indicted and convicted of being an impostor, He must retire into obscurity. This cannot be; there has not been a great reform in a thousand years that was not built about His teachings; there will not be in all the ages to come an important movement for the uplift of humanity that will not be inspired by His thought and words. He is the great “fact of history” and the growing figure of all time,—the only growing figure in the world today. And yet, the so-called liberals would wrap Him again in grave-cloths and roll back the stone that served as a door for His sepulchre. In so doing, they would crush the hope and comfort He has brought to man. If the Bible is true, Christ has made of death a narrow, starlit strip between the companionship of yesterday and the reunion of tomorrow; if the Bible is false, who shall answer for us the agonizing question of Job, “If a man die, shall he live again?”

If Christ did not rise from the dead, He could not have appeared to His disciples and therefore we must discard as false the concluding verses of the last chapter of Matthew :

18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying: All power is given unto me in Heaven and in earth.

- 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;
- 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always; even unto the end of the world.

Accepting this record as true Christians carry to the world a gospel intended for every human being, a code of morals that is to endure for all time, and a Saviour, with all power behind Him, who will be present always. What kind of gospel can those preach whose Christ was born a man like themselves, performed no miracles, brought no salvation, and who, after preaching to a group of deluded followers, was laid away in a new made grave and became the perpetual prisoner of man's great enemy, death?

The fifth proposition asserts that belief in the miracles performed by Christ is an essential doctrine of the Word of God. This proposition might well have come second because the veracity of the Word of God must be denied before the miracles can be disputed and the miracles must be discarded before objection can be made to the second, third, and fourth propositions. The natural order with those who depart from the Faith of our Fathers is first to deny the infallibility of the Bible, then to deny the authenticity of the miracles, then to deny the virgin birth, the atonement, and the resurrection because they are miracles. When all the miracles and all the supernatural are eliminated from the Bible it becomes a "scrap of paper." When its truths are diluted by the language of men they cease to stir the heart. "Weasel words," to use a phrase employed, if not coined, by President Roosevelt, such as "poetical," "allegorical," and "symbolical" suck the meaning out of the majestic utterances of those who were the spokesmen of Jehovah.



## D. FOR THE LIBERALS

### QUOTATIONS

By identifying the new learning with heresy, you make orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance.—*Erasmus*.<sup>1</sup>

He that speaks against his own reason, speaks against his own conscience: and therefore it is certain, no man serves God with a good conscience, who serves him against his reason.—*Jeremy Taylor*.<sup>2</sup>

He who begins by loving Christianity better than the truth, will proceed by loving his own sect or church better than Christianity, and end in loving himself better than all.—*Coleridge*.<sup>3</sup>

He who helps to disencumber Christianity from dubious or false accretions is rendering to it a service which may be more urgently necessary than if he composed a book of evidences.—*Dean Farrar*.<sup>4</sup>

But at the present moment two things about the Christian religion must surely be clear to anybody with eyes in his head. One is, that men cannot do without it; the other, that they cannot do with it as it is.—*Matthew Arnold*.<sup>5</sup>

### TRUE CHRISTIANITY IS PROGRESSIVE <sup>6</sup>

If wherever one takes seeing eyes one sees that growth is the law of life and movement is its innermost

<sup>1</sup> Heading of title page, *The Modern Churchman*, Oxford.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection*. p. 303.

<sup>3</sup> *Aids to Reflection*. p. 132.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Drake, *Problems of Religion*. p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Drake, *Problems of Religion*. p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> From a sermon, *Progressive Christianity*, by Harry Emerson Fosdick, preached in the First Presbyterian Church, New York, May 8, 1921.



necessity, how can one suppose that religion can escape the urgency of this principle? All views of Christianity tend to group themselves under two heads. The first is this: that Christianity is a static system, finally formulated in creed and ritual and practice at some time in the past; a deposit to be accepted *in toto* if at all; not to be added to, not to be subtracted from, not to be changed, its i's all dotted and its t's all crossed. Take it or leave it, but there it is, a finished article. And the second head under which you can group all other conceptions of Christianity is this: that Christianity is not a finished article, a static system; it is a growing movement. It is like a tree whose roots are deep in the spirit of Jesus. Sometimes it puts forth misshapen branches that must be pruned. Sometimes old branches die and must be lopped away. Because it is a growing, living, vital thing, it never has been quite the same thing in any two generations. We do not see it as our fathers did; our children will not see it as we do: but so long as its roots are in the spirit of Jesus let it grow, for its leaves shall be for the healing of the nations.

As between these two ways of conceiving Christianity, how can any man hesitate to choose, if he really knows Jesus and believes that Jesus still is the master of the movement that bears His name? A static religion was the last thing He ever dreamed of or wanted. Was He not reverent toward His people's past? No one more so! His thought, His speech, His spirit was saturated with the beauty of His race's heritage. Yet listen to Him: "It was said unto you of old time . . . but *I* say unto you." Again and again that utterance fell from His lips. His truth was rooted in the past but it was not imprisoned in the past; it grew up out of the past, not destroying but fulfilling it, as He said. He had the spirit of the prophets in Him, the prophets who once had spoken to His people in words of fire; but old forms that He thought had been outgrown He brushed aside.

He would not have His gospel a patch on an old garment, He said, nor would He put it like new wine into old wine skins. Even when He bade farewell to His disciples He did not talk to them as if what He himself had said were a finished system: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth."

### PROTESTANTISM AT THE CROSSROADS<sup>1</sup>

One cannot have served for a generation in the active ministry of the Protestant Church without thinking a good deal about it all, and coming to some conclusions. The times call for much plain speaking about religion—the more the better. Here are one man's convictions—uttered freely, subject to revision, certainly open to criticism and challenge; but the honest outcome of cumulative service and thinking.

Protestantism is today in a critical position. It may have had its day, and henceforth exist as a declining, weakening cause. It may burst into new vigor, and go on into the splendor of a new day and a new life. Whether this or that shall be its destiny depends on the Protestants themselves, on no one else, on nothing else; on their courage, on their insight, on their obedience to the leadership of the Spirit of Christ, on whether they let their churches remain partly Catholic, or make them wholly Protestant.

The danger does not lie in any "Roman peril," in any "Catholic encroachments," which Protestantism must stoutly resist, or be driven from the field. The remedy does not lie in the use of propaganda, or any other outward means of defense or offense, whether the coarse indefensible methods of the Ku Klux Klan, or more

<sup>1</sup> By William Pierson Merrill, D.D., pastor of the Brick Presbyterian Church, New York. *World's Work*. 47 : 418-24. February, 1924.

subtle anti-Catholic agitation. The simple remedy is in making Protestantism true to itself; for if fully true to itself it will be irresistible. There is ample room today, there will be ample room for many years ahead, for a genuinely "Catholic" Church, and for a genuinely "Protestant" Church; for a "religion of authority," and a "religion of the spirit." There is little room today, and there will be less and less room, for a church which tries to serve two masters, which professes to trust in the spirit, but still clings to the emblems and methods and assumptions of external authority, afraid in its heart to let them go, and really to live its life and do its work "not by might, nor by craft, but by spirit."

Up to the present time Protestantism has been able to hold together the men who face forward and the men who walk backward. There are large sections of Protestantism, in Europe and America, which are heartily committed to the forward look and the forward march. On the whole Protestantism has faced forward. But a determined and vociferous party is now trying to hold the Protestant churches back. It must not be allowed to succeed; for its success would be the doom of Protestantism.

Protestantism will be doomed to dwindle and die, if it keeps on trying to compete with Catholicism on its own lines and ground. The Reformation went but part way. It was glory and wonder enough, to dare go so far as it did at the time. Had we but the courage those men had, we would go to the limit! We stand where they left us. They reformed and protested. We have kept on reforming and protesting, trying to hold to the Catholic basis and yet stand for free and spiritual religion.

Protestantism has held too much to the Catholic idea of *authority*. Only it has substituted a theory of a mechanically inerrant book for a claim of a magically inerrant pope—a less pretentious, if more reasonable,

pretension, a weaker claim because less spectacular, less easy to make real. Ask any literalistic Protestant *why* he believes in an inerrant Bible; he cannot give an adequate reason, any more than the Romanist can give an adequate reason for his faith in an inerrant pope. "You must believe it;" "You are not safe without it;" that is all.

Protestantism has held too strongly to the Catholic idea of *faith as a "deposit"*—a system of belief, once given, which one must accept implicitly if he would be safe and right with God. Only it has substituted a bewildering variety of competing doctrinal declarations for one authorized belief. Enforced intellectual conformity has at least the semblance of majesty in the Catholic system; it becomes ridiculous in Protestantism, with its scores of sects, each trying to enforce conformity to its private system of belief.

Protestantism has held too much to the Catholic idea that *God is found best in the unusual* and the extraordinary "Would you be surest of God? Watch for a miracle!" We cling to the magic of sacramentarianism, or obstinately defend the divinity of the inexplicable; we say: "No miracle, no God." Only we put all our miracles back 1900 years or more. The Catholic is more consistent. His God works miracles now. Here also Protestantism too often insists on the same faith, but in diluted form.

Just as a matter of strategy, Protestantism cannot afford to keep on with this attempt to compete with Catholicism on its own ground. Such an attempt must issue in defeat. It is like pitting amateurs against professionals. A diluted religion makes a feeble appeal!

Protestantism is at the crossroads! One of the dividing paths is a continuation of that already followed for the most part, a path carefully kept distinct from the old Roman road, but parallel to it. We may insist that our way is better than theirs; perhaps we can make clear

that it is; we may point out that we allow freedom to take diverging routes. But our protestations are of little effect if the two main roads clearly move on side by side, even though some way apart. When two things are alike in their claims and assumptions, it is instinctive for men to assume that "the old is better." If men are going to have "religion of authority," they prefer it full strength.

The other course is clear, open, straight. If Protestantism would cease "halting between two opinions," and would take that way with a whole heart, a clear conscience, and an undivided judgment, a great day would dawn, not only for Protestantism, but for the soul of man—one of the real "days of the Son of Man."

What must Protestantism do in order to take this way that shines more and more unto the perfect day? These are some of the answers one man would make on the basis of his thought, experience, and observation:

1. Protestantism must frankly and fully abandon the whole notion of external authority of the Roman type, and trust wholeheartedly in spirit. It may keep its creeds, but only as helps toward personal conviction and united action, as declarations of the things most surely believed at the time, and therefore registering the advance thus far made. It will keep its Bible, as the supreme expression of spiritual experience, as the highest written revelation of God, as a trustworthy guide not to the facts of science but to the conduct of life and the knowledge of God and duty, no more to be taken literally than music or poetry are. It will care not less but more for Christ and His Gospel of redemption. It must put a premium on progress, rather than on conformity, in thinking. It must think of faith, not as a deposit, but as an adventure; not as a treasure in the memory, but as an attitude of the living soul. It must exalt as its hero the one who seeks truth at any cost, even more than the one who defends what others have thought true.

This means that the absurdity of denominationalism



must be left behind. Doubtless it will always be wise and convenient to organize Christians into varying groups, to meet their differing ideas and sentiment and ways. But "denominationalism," as here used, means more and other than that. It means an undue pride in one's own variety; an intolerance toward others; an insistence on shibboleths of doctrine and form and practice, as standards of orthodoxy, as criteria of good standing and fellowship. All that must go; for it is inconsistent with Protestantism and, indeed, with Christianity. Denominationalism would substitute for the Christian Church a set of private ecclesiastical clubs.

It is time we were facing the question: What right has a denomination to exist? Of course men and women have a legal right to get together and form any sort of society the law will permit. But it is plain truth that no organization of men and women has a right to call itself a Christian Church which is not built on Christ's lines. Men differ as to what Christ requires, demands, desires a church to be. Therefore there is room for varying attempts to realize the ideal of Christ. But no denomination has a right to exist, save as an attempt to realize Christ's ideal for the universal church. All our great denominations were started by men who believed with all the force of their souls that their particular doctrines or forms were essential to Christianity, that "out of them there was no ordinary possibility of salvation." This modern, easy-going practice of recognizing that members of other ecclesiastical bodies are good Christians, and yet insisting that the doctrines and practices which divide us from them are essential, would strike our forefathers as ludicrously inconsistent. Thank God that we have thus grown more broadminded! But let us have the courage of our convictions, and own cheerfully that none of the things that divide any one set of Christians can possibly be counted essential for any Christian.

If Christ did not found the church and lay down its

lines, it has no divine authority. If He did, then to change those lines, to alter conditions, to demand what He did not demand, to insist on that which He ignored, is indefensible. To be more than Christian is as un-Christian as to be less than Christian.

As matters now are, practically every Protestant denomination demands of its officers, or of its members, or of somebody, what it knows Christ never demanded of anybody. It counts essential what Christ and His apostles clearly did not count essential. It clings to things which Christ never mentioned. Plead, if you will, that your denomination is standing for a "sacred contribution," its own "peculiar heritage." Very well, stand for that! But if you make that "peculiar heritage" of yours an essential test by which you include or exclude, you are usurping the throne of the Master; and that means, in so far forth, that you are not really Christian.

Protestant Church unity—real, though not necessarily organic—that much-desired, long-deferred end—would come surely and speedily if every denomination of Protestants would simply decide honestly that it believes Christ and the New Testament account essential for the *Christian Church*, and then put its own doctrine and practice and fellowship on that basis, giving up insistence on anything and everything else, no matter how traditionally precious.

2. Protestantism must accept, with all its implications, and in a daring spirit, the truth that religion is a "way" of life rather than a formula. It must test a Christian, not so much by what he thinks or by what he feels, as by the way he lives. It must assert that Jesus meant us to live in the way of His words and example, and that any profession of faith in Him is hollow and ineffective which does not issue in doing as He says.

This is a hard path to take. There are many who grow uneasy at attempts to apply Christ's ideals to living questions and current practices. What an incredible in-

version of reality when one is restless at hearing the teachings of Jesus discussed and applied, and "wishes the minister would preach the Gospel." What is the Gospel, if not the way of life according to Jesus Christ? Men must have creeds, sacraments, worship, all that the church stands for; but all for the end of right, loving, helpful, godly living. Let Protestantism say that, and stand by it, instead of toying longer with the seductive message of priestliness in all ages—that something else can be a substitute for righteousness. This is the test—What are you doing with Jesus and His way? Do you actually line up with Him against the world? Let Protestantism make that its chief test of good standing.

3. Protestantism must break squarely with Catholic distrust of the human intellect and avow a complete, unreserved trust in the processes and results of scientific investigation and thinking.

Romanists have stood by their "deposit of faith," anathematizing all who depart from it, whatever science may say. Protestants have professed a faith in freedom of intellect; but too often they have let themselves be dragged along grudgingly, timidly, making half-hearted attempts to tie bits of new knowledge to bits of the old belief. Is it any wonder that some who have for the Roman Catholic a sort of contemptuous respect have for such Protestants only contempt? The Protestant must declare his faith that all truth is God's truth, that fact ascertained by honest investigation is always to be taken as truth. He must not grudgingly or timidly acquiesce in the right of the human intellect to free scientific investigation of any and every matter, including religion, of any and every book, including the Bible; he must glory in that right, eagerly champion and defend it, working shoulder to shoulder with the scientist in the search for truth. "Warfare between science and religion" may at times be a necessary and worthy conflict for the Romanist. It is always needless and destructive internecine

strife for the Protestant. Protestantism must avow its absolute confidence in the best obtainable knowledge, and must stand by that avowal, though the old heavens fall.

4. Most important of all, Protestantism must take an unequivocal stand for the sanctity and supreme importance of common present living reality.

There lingers in many Protestants something of the old notion that the further we get back into the past, or away from living reality, the nearer we come to God; that common sense is essentially undivine. "Here is miracle; here is direct creation; therefore here is God," says the old theology. "Explain the miracle, describe the process of creation, and God disappears. Common sense cannot get on with the divine. God can live only when cloaked in mystery."

Here Protestantism must take the new way with cheerful courage. It must see and assert and defend the claim, that the more simple and common and universal and indubitable anything is, the more divine it is; that the more science explains the process, the better God stands revealed therein; that when we take some Biblical story, some ancient idea, some well-known doctrine, some traditional rite or form, and make it fit present-day experience, we are finding God, not losing Him; that the less theatrical and magical God's revelation is shown to be, the more it becomes a real revelation of God to meet human needs.

For after all what we really need most is not the past history of a God who once worked wonders, but light on God as we deal with Him today, and as He deals with us. And the more the past experiences of men with God, and the past dealings of God with men, can be shown to be like our own relations with our own God, the more real and worthy the revelation of God is.

Catholicism says: "Hold to the God who has been." Protestantism, when true to itself will say: "Live with the God Who is."

When men begin to point out that the great facts and doctrines of Christianity are striking, glorious, perfect forthsettings of universal truths; that there is much in nature and in other religions setting forth the same truths; that the inspiration of the Bible writers, while it may go far beyond, is akin to that of poet and artist and musician; that the perfect divinity of Jesus, while it may be much more, is truly the supreme manifestation of the divine that is in all men and "rolls through all things;" that the atonement on Calvary is the supreme expression of the cosmic law that life advances through the sacrifice of the fittest and best; that the resurrection of Christ is the seal on the unquenchable hope of immortality in the human heart—when Christian truth is thus knit up with the facts of life, the Catholic is uneasy, for to him God is being lost in the common; but the true Protestant rejoices and gives thanks, for he is finding God where he needs Him most, finding the real and living and true God.

The true Protestant may, and probably will, believe in miracle. To be religious at all, one must believe in a non-mechanical universe, a world at the heart of which is a person not a dynamo, freedom not necessity. The Protestant may accept as true all the miracle stories in the Bible that are not unworthy of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. But to make acceptance of the literal historical accuracy of every story in the Bible a test of Christian standing is to deny the real Protestant faith. It is to manifest "an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the Living God." To the true Protestant, nothing in theology is or can be of first or fundamental importance which has not a vital connection with living experience of Christian believers.

Protestantism is at the crossroads! And a vociferous, determined party in its ranks is attempting, by threats, by arguments, by any and every means, to keep it marching along the old way, parallel to the old Roman road,



though at a distance from it, and alleged to be utterly unlike it. Tell a Fundamentalist that he is fundamentally a Romanist, and he would be shocked. Yet fundamentalism is diluted Romanism, or denatured Protestantism. It virtually denies the reality and sufficiency of the spiritual. It asserts, in its five points,<sup>1</sup> that that alone is real which appeals to the senses—no real inspiration of divinity in Jesus, unless it has a physical basis, through the Bible unless it is in the manuscripts; no real a particular kind of birth; no real resurrection unless bodily; no real atonement except through material blood; no real presence of Christ with His people until He comes back with a physical body. The Fundamentalist thinks he is standing for the Protestant faith, defending essential Christianity. He is really denying the very fundamental position of Protestantism, the supremacy, authority, and sufficiency of God-enlightened spiritual experience. He is holding the Christianity of Christ insufficient, in that he demands we hold essential what Christ ignored. Jesus said not a syllable about the inerrancy of the Bible, or about the manner of His own birth. He deprecated faith based on miracles and signs. To make essential these matters which He ignored is equivalent to a denial of His Lordship. Such a Protestantism as the Fundamentalists would make is simply a shadow of Romanism, with its claims and pretensions, and none of its glamor and impressiveness. A man of today, sharing today's full and glad trust in free and independent thinking, its wholehearted interest in spiritual experience, may have a certain respect for Roman Catholicism, with its rigid consistency, its obstinate defence of unbroken tradition. What respect can he have for a Protestantism that tries to be half traditional and half free?

Protestantism at the crossroads! There is a great and growing company of men and women who believe in God, and love Jesus Christ, and want to serve men for His sake and in His spirit, who find it utterly impossible

<sup>1</sup> See p. 21.

to submit to the yoke of imposed ecclesiastical authority in the matter of their thinking. The Roman Catholic Church for them is impossible. Can the Protestant Church win and hold them for Christ and His religion? That depends on the road Protestantism takes. The issue is clearly defined. The roads fork so that no one can miss seeing the parting of the ways. Is Protestantism to "stick" where Luther and Calvin left it? John Robinson asked that question away back in 1620 when the Pilgrims were leaving Delftshaven. It is pertinent to ask it again today. Shall Protestantism continue to be a partially reformed Catholicism, a modified Romanism, or is it now ready to become what the great reformers meant that it should be, the natural and instinctive faith of every free soul, the religion of democracy, the religion of the spirit, the religion which was and is in the heart and soul and teachings and life of Jesus Christ?

When Luther was on his way to Worms, men and women lined the roadside, crying out to him, "Do not fail us," invoking curses on him if he weakened, blessings if he stood firm. They saw the issues but dimly; but somehow they knew their freedom and progress to be bound up with that one man's "plain truth to manhood and to God's supreme design." A great host of men and women who would fain believe, who long to find God, and to follow Christ, and to live in the power and joy of a real Christian faith and fellowship, and at the same time to keep faith, as in honor they must, with their own honest thinking and their own spiritual integrity, line the way today, crying out to the leaders of the Protestant church: "Do not fail us!" And we must and shall not fail!

Frederick W. Robertson charted the way long ago: "To live by faith in God; to do and say the right because it is lovely; to dare to gaze on the splendor of naked truth, without putting a false veil before it to terrify children and old women with mystery and vagueness—

that is the life of a true, brave man who will take Christ and His mind for the truth instead of the clamor either of the worldly world, or of the religious world."

### WHAT IS "MODERNISM"?<sup>1</sup>

... We shall therefore use the term "Modernist" as denoting the movement in the Anglican church, and indeed, in other churches, which believes that religion needs to be interpreted afresh to the modern man and that it can be so interpreted without the loss of any essential element. It is prepared to welcome without reserve the results of historical criticism and scientific discovery with their new outlook on the world. It strives to preserve a real continuity with the past and is resolved to work within the church to which its adherents belong. At the same time it recognizes in varying degrees that the time has come when services, formulas, and doctrinal statements require revision. It needs, however, to be said very clearly that Modernism is not primarily the acceptance of a set of opinions and new dogmas, critical or scientific. Any given Modernist may or may not believe in the Virgin Birth or the empty tomb, or the apostolic authorship of the Fourth Gospel. The essence of Modernism lies, not in its conclusions, but in the way they are reached and the temper in which they are held. Modernists agree that we can no longer appeal to the authority of Bible, creeds or church as something fixed and decisive; they agree that the Spirit of God is speaking in divers channels and by divers voices and that we must be ready to hear all that He saith to the churches; and they agree that truth flourishes best in an atmosphere of freedom and that the church must be brave enough to suffer a great variety of opinions within its walls.

<sup>1</sup> By the late Cyril W. Emmett. *The Modernist Movement in the Church of England*. *Journal of Religion*. 2 : 561-76. November, 1922.

THE ISSUE BETWEEN THE FUNDAMENTALISTS AND THE MODERNISTS<sup>1</sup>

The fundamental issue is the conflict between the open and the closed mind. That exactly sums up the whole question. What at the moment is called fundamentalism is in reality an attitude of mind characteristic of man as far back as we can trace his thinking.

In order to appreciate this fully we must leave religion altogether and go to the fundamental science of biology. Prior to self-consciousness living things were governed by the vegetative nervous system and were under the complete dominance of the emotions and instincts. In the long course of our evolution there was gradually evolved a central nervous system ultimately finding its seat in the brain, and for the first time reason appeared.

At that moment began the inner conflict symbolically described in the third chapter of Genesis and called in theology the fall.

Now reason is relatively a late comer and all biologists are agreed that most men are still under the dominance of their instincts and emotions. One of the chief characteristics of this type of person is the craving for certainty, particularly certainty with reference to the future. And along with this phenomenon goes the dread, the sincere dread, of altering the *status quo* in matters religious.

This type of human nature, unaccustomed to independent thinking, has throughout all history fallen back for its guidance upon an external infallible court of appeal to which it can always go with absolute confidence as to the verdict.

In the time of Christ the representatives of this group were in the majority. The Pharisees had placed the

<sup>1</sup> By Rev. Stuart L. Tyson, vice-president of the Modern Churchmen's Union. Christian Work. p. 18-19. January 5, 1924.

court of appeal in the law. They believed that God's final revelation was to be found there. Christ came affirming that God had new truth to impart. The fact that it was new condemned it, and because Christ continued to preach it, they determined to kill him.

At all stages in Christian history since that day this dead hand has been in evidence. Today the successors of these men are, as we have said, called Fundamentalists. Their essential characteristic is a mind closed to new truth. All alike, whether "Catholic" Fundamentalist or Protestant Fundamentalist, believe that in a particular period in the past the full revelation of truth was completed. If Protestant Fundamentalists, the period of completion will perhaps be the seventeenth century; if "Catholic" Fundamentalists, it will be the thirteenth.

Both alike living in the twentieth century, look backward for their inspiration. Each confounds that which the historian knows is but a human interpretation of truth adapted to a particular age with truth itself, and affirms that a man is loyal to Christ only in so far as he makes his own that interpretation.

Now it should be clearly recognized that these men are good men and also sincere. The Modernist has no quarrel whatever with them for holding this position. His studies have shown him in the clearest manner that there are diversities of gifts in different types of human nature, and he rejoices in a church which is comprehensive and many-sided.

His protest begins at the moment when this or any other type, in an egoism utterly alien to the spirit of the Gospel, affirms that its own intellectual conception of truth is more pleasing to God than another, and a great weakness of fundamentalism is its un-Christian utterances in this regard. It has made the mistake of confounding truth with a particular interpretation of truth.

What today is called modernism is a point of view that stands for the open mind; the belief, namely, that



truth is not given all at once, but, on the contrary, to quote from the New Testament, is imparted "in many portions and in many manners," according as man is able to grasp it.

The Modernist believes, and he finds justification for his belief not only in the teachings of Christ, but in the universal witness of history, that the revelation of truth has been and is and will be progressive. At first, just as in the individual in childhood, so in the race as a whole, it is elementary and primitive.

When what has been given has been assimilated, more truth is imparted, and this added truth necessarily involves some modification of what up to that time has been believed. The process is again repeated. Still more truth is given and still further modification is required.

The Modernist is convinced that the process will continue so long as time shall last. With the greatest of all Christians, Paul, he is continually saying both to himself and to others, "Now I know in part."

It is not that he imagines truth itself to undergo alteration; truth is what is, but our conception of truth (which the Fundamentalist mistakenly confounds with truth itself) undergoes modification in each succeeding generation. This is in strict accord with the principle enunciated by Christ himself, who is reported to have said just prior to His death,

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye are not able to bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you unto all the truth.

Or to put it in other words, the Fundamentalist conceives of religion as static; the Modernist preaches it as dynamic. This is the real underlying issue of which we observe merely the manifestations in the different churches today.

Differences of belief between the Fundamentalist and the Modernist today are almost accidental. The Funda-

mentalist, owing to his philosophical position, must necessarily express himself along one line; the Modernist, on the other hand, is desirous of consecrating every bit of new knowledge, from whatever source derived, to the religion of Christ, partly because he loves truth above all things, partly because he is eager to show men and women, trained in twentieth century habits of thought, that the Christian religion has lost none of its pristine vitality, and that it is possible to harmonize with its essential truths what these men and women have learned to be true in other departments of life.

As a simple illustration, Mr. Bryan, that eminent Fundamentalist, necessarily feels that the evolutionary hypothesis is antagonistic to the Christian religion because it contradicts the second chapter of Genesis. The Modernist, on the other hand, who reveres the religious teachings of the second chapter of Genesis quite as sincerely as Mr. Bryan, has come to realize that the form of the narrative is wholly symbolic and was never intended to be a historical fact.

Or as to the whole question of the miraculous: The Fundamentalist sincerely believes that these abnormal events described in the New Testament actually occurred, simply because the text of the New Testament says so. The Modernist has come to the clear realization that these are not in any sense religious, but purely scientific questions, and should be set aside for scientific investigators ultimately to pass upon them.

The Fundamentalist is absolutely convinced that belief in Christ is indissolubly bound up with not only the manner in which He is alleged to have entered the world, but also the way in which some New Testament documents affirm He departed from it. The Modernist says these matters are indifferent. My inner experience testifies to the reality of the living Christ. I do not know how He entered or how He departed from the world, and if I did my faith in Him, which in fact is based on my

fellowship with Him, would be neither increased nor decreased.

The grave temptation of the Fundamentalist is to be intolerant. One of the central convictions of the Modernist is that tolerance is among the highest Christian virtues. One would shut out, the other welcomes with all his heart the New Learning. None who in an impartial spirit is carefully observing the trend of human thought in the western world today can be in the slightest doubt as to which will emerge victorious.

### THE ONE FUNDAMENTAL<sup>1</sup>

*"Therefore I say unto you, every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him."*—*Matthew 12:31, 32.*

This is a hard saying. It is one of those texts we like to leave alone. Preachers, as well as other Christians, when they come to this place, tread softly and avert the face, and pass by on the other side. If we should speak out our real thoughts we would wish at times that this text were not in the Bible. It does not seem like Jesus to say such words.

Have we ever asked ourselves whether the trouble may not be with our idea of Jesus, rather than with the saying? Conventional ideas, teachers more kind than intelligent, and artists' conceptions have combined to make us think Jesus a kindly soul who lived to make people comfortable. He was not that, and He is not that. He is the great Spirit who wants to make people right, and will make them uncomfortable, clear down to the bottom of their hearts, if He can thereby arouse them to righteousness. There is only one recorded instance of His

<sup>1</sup> By Rev. William Pierson Merrill, D.D., pastor of the Brick Presbyterian Church, New York. *Christian Work*. 115: 346-50. September 22, 1923.

using a whip of material cords, but often those who come near to Him find Him speaking words which whip and sting the conscience.

When we really search the Scriptures, laying aside conventional and inherited ideas of the Master of us all, we are amazed at the moral vigor of Christ, the heat of His indignation, the severity of His ethical judgments. His words are like searchlights, and He does not shrink, nor will He let us slip away, until their full work of soul revelation has been done.

It was my privilege recently to hear a great scholar read a paper on Jesus as He is presented in the first three Gospels. At the end of the fascinating presentation the outstanding characteristic was moral severity. One got an indelible impression of One who would not trifle with the truth, who would hew to the line wherever the chips might fall. Christ did come to save men and to give them rest; but before He can save us or give us rest He must make us see what we are, and desire what we are not, that we may be led to offer that prayer which always preconditions rest and salvation,

Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me.

There is no more important question today for the Church than this: "What is fundamental or essential according to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?" We get the answer clearly and decisively in this strange saying about the unpardonable sin. This is the answer, coming in a way beyond doubt, *the essential is the spirit*.

Christ was always poetic, never pedantic. One trouble with theology is that it has so earnestly tried to reduce His flaming messages and glowing thoughts to precise statements. The Gospels are poetry, appeals to the heart. One can get better results out of them by using a piano than by using the yardstick of logic. To estimate the Gospel of Christ in severely logical terms is one with

judging the Sistine Madonna in terms of paint and canvas.

Keeping in mind this poetic character of the thoughts and words of the Master, this is what we find Jesus saying in this text: that the sin beyond all others is the sin against the Spirit of God which is at work in the world. That Spirit is the spirit of helpfulness, of love, of kindness, of sacrifice, of redemption. It is the spirit through which He healed the poor victims of demon obsessions. He could not restrain Himself when the religious leaders of His time looked askance at that spirit in which He lived and worked, or talked of it disparagingly. "Say what you will about Me," He cries. "Grave as that is, to talk against the Son of Man, it is not the worst sin. But to speak against the Spirit, the Spirit that loves and sorrows and saves, that is a sin so deep that it goes to the roots. If any sin is hopeless, that is the hopeless sin."

Is there not here evidence beyond dispute as to that which Christ counts most essential? With unerring insight the church as a whole, down through the ages, has put in the foremost place among its doctrines belief in Jesus Christ. It has rightly counted that which men think and say about the Son of Man as of supreme importance in Christian thought. And in this verse our Master declares that the worst sin is not to say or think something wrong about Him, but to take the wrong attitude toward the Spirit. Not any doctrine, not any form or order, not even Christ Himself! The spirit is the essential consideration; that is the one fundamental of Christianity. Where the spirit of Christ is, there is true Christianity; where that spirit is lacking, though creeds be correct and though everything else be present, Christ and Christianity are not present.

Do you see how emphatic that teaching is? It is Christ's own statement that one may speak against the Son of Man, or if you want to put it in modern terms, may deny the divinity of Christ and still not be beyond



hope; but he cannot speak against the Spirit which is incarnate in Christ, the spirit which lives in Christianity, the spirit which breathes in the Gospels and which gives them its power. One cannot deny that without denying religion and committing a sin so deep that there is no ground left for hope. I beg of you, my friends, realize that this is not my statement, nor one made by liberals or Modernists or by any other party in the Church; it is Christ's own clear judgment.

I beg of you, take at their full value these clear words, comparing the Son of Man and the Spirit of God as objects of reverence and faith. What do these words mean? That no doctrine, not even the great doctrine about Christ Himself, is so important, so really fundamental, as is the Spirit of God, the spirit in which we must live our lives and do our work.

We hesitate to make so bold a statement. All around us are voices crying out that we must make the doctrine of our Lord's deity the test of a standing or falling church, that the unpardonable heresy is to have a doubt as to that great truth. And these voices go on to say that we must not only believe in the deity of our Lord, but that we must hold a particular theory about it, a specific view as to the method by which He came into human life, or some other special phase of faith in His divinity. All that is of interest; all of that is important, most of it is very important; some of it is vital. It is plain truth of history that ever since Jesus came in the flesh, those have been most powerful and worth-while for the work of Christ in the world who have had a clear and joyous faith that God was in Him and that God stands forever revealed in Him. It is folly for us to forget that testimony of Christian history. It is right for us to uphold with all the vigor of our souls the necessity of faith in the deity of our Lord. But it is simply following His own estimates and judgments when we say that the supreme test is and always must be, not

what we say or do about the Son of Man, always it is what we say and do with the Spirit of God, the spirit in which Christ lived and died, the spirit of our most holy religion. Other things are important, some of them enormously important; this alone is fundamental.

Some one may protest, but did not Paul say, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus." Yes, and we know that Paul there spoke the truth. A house built on any other foundation than that of full faith in Jesus Christ cannot last. But take a strongly founded house, and you know that down below the stone foundation, down below the concrete bases, at last you come to the solid rock on which the whole thing rests. That solid rock in the Christian religion is not any particular doctrine; it is the Spirit of God, of Christ, of our religion. That is, that must be, the chief concern of Christians and of the Church. It is Christ who pronounces the judgment; the only unforgivable sin is a sin against the Spirit.

Some one may protest, "But you are basing a great conviction on a single saying." God forbid! Go through the New Testament and see how the message that has come to us from this one text rings out from the whole Gospel and from much of the New Testament. Read through the Gospels with the question in mind, "What did Jesus always count the worst sin?" You will find the answer one with what you are finding in this text. Search through His sayings. You will find not a single case in which He tells of any one judged or condemned for lack of faith in any theological doctrine, but you will find a vivid picture of the day of judgment, where some go into life eternal and others into eternal death; and the test, and the only test, the absolute test, is the spirit in which they have lived their lives and done their work. Have they ministered in the name of Christ, or in the spirit of Christ to their fellow-men? That is the only test. In all the Gospel teachings you will find

not one picture of a man suffering in future torment for lack of doctrinal soundness ; but you will find a vivid picture of a man in the torment of hell because of lack of the spirit of love and kindness. Jesus once spoke of a certain kind of man as being "in danger of the hell of fire." Who is that man? He is the one who treats his brother with scorn or contempt, who uses hard names about him. He is just a man who has lived without the spirit of loving kindness.

On that very night in which our Lord gave to His friends the blessed and wonderful gift of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper He gave also His one final test for His Church. Better than any other word in the whole Bible, it defines the true test of a standing or falling Church. "Hereby shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love for one another."

Some one wrote to me a few days ago asking about the origin of the Apostles' Creed. In reply I gave the facts, that there is no evidence of its existence in its present form earlier than the fifth century ; that in a simpler form it dates back perhaps to the second century ; certainly not earlier. But here, in this word about the spirit of love, we have a test that goes back to the Lord himself. If it comes to a choice as to which the Christian shall hold to be authoritative as a test for the Church, the creed which came later, or the word of the Lord himself, choose Christ's test of a spirit of love.

Turn over a few pages and see what Paul gives as the fundamental and essential thing. The words throng upon one another. "Christ in you, the hope of glory." "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema ; but grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love incorruptible." There is one question which Paul clearly would put, even more searching than the question, "What do you believe about Christ?" and that is "Do you love Christ?" Nowhere has he spoken more decisively about the test of one's

Christianity than in the words, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His." His great answer is in the chapter on love. "Faith, hope, these," he says, "are noble; but even these, like all other gifts—faith that could remove mountains, hope that will not be ashamed, orthodox faith, millennial hope—all of these are less in value and in importance than the spirit of love." Of course, Paul says, as we should say, that these other things are not at all unimportant. They are immensely important. But only one thing is fundamental, to live and act and serve and sacrifice in the spirit of love. That is Christianity, as nothing else is, and all doctrines and forms and everything else are of subsidiary importance. That alone is primary.

My friends, this is what the Church must say and mean. It is time for frank dealing, for taking a bold stand with the Lord Jesus and His great Apostle, though that stand be against the world. It will not be against the world. The world is waiting for a church that dares put in the first place the spirit of Christ. The Church is needing to be set free from bondage to secondary things, to serve the Lord who is the Spirit. This great word, that the spirit is the only fundamental, is indeed "the great word that makes all things new." There lie back of us long, hard periods through which the Church slowly came to a formulation of its faith. Out from that time have come majestic creeds. They are treasures which the Church should ever hold with reverence and use with joy; but it is time that we should leave that well-done work and turn to our own work of today. The Church today, in most of its branches, cares too much about particular doctrines, is too greatly interested in trying to say over again and again what the men of the past ages said so well. We cannot ignore beliefs and intellectual convictions. We must think them, and re-think them, state them and restate them; but it is a pitiful thing when there comes to power in the Church

the spirit that sees as its greatest task pushing us all back, back, until we land in a particular corner, hemmed in by minute doctrinal statements. It is time for the Church to teach men how to be free in the grace and glory of God's spirit.

We face a world today that is in desperate need, that can be saved in but one way, through the grace of God which is in Christ. It is time we followed Christ by taking His judgments as the true ones. We must rise up and live and walk in the spirit, counting that the first essential.

Is this attitude bold? Is it going too far? One cannot go too far on the right road, and above all things, the Church today needs boldness. We must stop using our beliefs as fences to hold men in, and use them as rails on which to get forward. Once more sounds out the call, "Leave all and follow Me;" and part of what we must leave, if we are to follow the Christ who alone can save the world, is our overdone interest in doctrine. It is not that we should put away our creeds, but that we should cease talking about them so much or thinking that the defense of the creed is the primary concern of the Church, that we should assume the truth to which the Church has given so many years of painstaking thought, and welcome all honorable servants of Christ who heartily affirm the great elements of Christian faith, and then put our whole soul and life and heart and strength into the task of making the spirit of Christ and His gospel the controlling power in the life of man.

Before anyone here dismisses this plea as overbold, or as going too far, I beg him to ask himself, "Is this what one preacher says? Or is it what Christ says?" Who is it, after all, who declares to us, "Though I have all faith, but have not love, I am nothing?" It is not some modern preacher; it is Christ's greatest interpreter. Who is it that says to us, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love?" Who is it



that says that the one unpardonable sin is the sin against the Spirit, that the one unpardonable word is a word against the Spirit? It is not some modern preacher; it is the Lord of us all, the Lord who is the Spirit, who says these words. To a Church divided over lesser things and thoughts, a Church too weak to do its saving work in the world because so much of its interest is given to making secondary matters primary, sounds out the stern, sorrowful question, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" And what has He said, in all the wide range of the Gospel, with greater emphasis, with more solemn finality, than that the one thing that is absolutely fundamental, the only thing without which man or church is hopeless, the one and only absolute test which He left for our Christianity, is that we live and walk and work and speak and serve and sacrifice in the spirit of love in which He lived and died.

## FUNDAMENTALISM, MODERNISM, AND GOD <sup>1</sup>

Manifestly, the editorial page of a current periodical is no place in which to make an exhaustive or even an exact treatise upon so vast and many-sided a theme as that of the meaning of God. The limited space at our disposal, the mood of both writer and reader, and the purpose of such a periodical forbid the adoption of the method and technique of academic discussion or more ambitious authorship. Yet there is a service which, in view of the heat and confusion of these days, a journal of religious opinion may render to its readers. That is to attempt to sketch in a few rough, broad strokes its own interpretation of the controversy, not merely in respect of those details which are thrust into prominence by events, but in respect of the elemental issues themselves. The conditions and conceptions of life have so

<sup>1</sup> From *Christian Century*. 41: 358-61, 392-4. March 20 and 27, 1924.

view of this vision, the squabbling bishop and rector are as if they were two French nobles in the days of the Revolution, quarreling about their pedigrees as they were riding in the tumbrel to the guillotine.

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doctrine. The line between conservatism and liberalism is a shaded line—indeed there is no “line between” at all. The terms represent rather the range of intellectual differences within a common fellowship. But fundamentalism is an exclusive fellowship, a cult by itself. Its leaders define it as “militant conservatism,” by which they mean, without apology, “conservatism” waging a war of expulsion upon all who do not accept certain doctrines. Modernism, on its side, is no less definite in its aims than fundamentalism, but it absolutely disavows the spirit of intolerance which fundamentalism treats as a virtue. The Modernist gladly takes into his fellowship the most extreme conservative and would extend his hand to Fundamentalists as well. Indeed, it is of the essence of his position so to do. It is the genius of fundamentalism, however, that it sees the implacable conflict between its system and modernism, and that it could not match the tolerance of modernism by an equal tolerance without thereby ceasing to be fundamentalism.

But if Modernists make no issue with Fundamentalists as to personal fellowship and churchly cooperation, it is at last waking up to discern the mutual exclusiveness of the two systems. Both cannot be inscribed on the same Christian banner. If fundamentalism be true, Christianity is one kind of religion. If modernism be true, Christianity is another and radically different kind of religion. The issue between the two is sharply drawn. No outcome is conceivable save the gradual penetration of one by the other, or the disruption of the Christian church into two rival faiths. For our own part we have little fear of so great a tragedy as another schism in Protestantism. Modernism has already made such contributions to the thinking of churchly leadership; the scientific point of view has become so well established in secular culture and practical affairs; and the ill-adjustments of a survival-church to changing world conditions are producing such disquiet

and embarrassment to religion that fundamentalism is, as we see it, incapable of winning its war of expulsion and disruption. The crisis to which religion has come requires utter candor and honesty in discussion. In this respect Fundamentalists excel Modernists, though the reserve and obscurantism of many convinced Modernists is balanced by the intolerance of the Fundamentalists—so neither side may boast! The time has come, so it seems to us, to take the issue out of class room and professional conference and discuss it in the hearing of all sorts and conditions of men. It is vital now to say that some things are so, and that some things are not so. As far as possible—and it is by no means an absolute rule—our yea should be yea and our nay nay. In this spirit *The Christian Century* purposes to consider the basic issues, beginning at this time with the fundamentalist view and the modern view of God.

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The basic distinction between the God of tradition and the God of modernism is found in the difference between two sets of mental images with which God is conceived by the two groups. Behind our elaborate theologies and creedal systems there lie certain mental pictures, more or less vague, more or less distinct, which prompt and uphold our theories. These images are implicit in all our thinking about so vast a theme as the meaning of God. Our differences are not logical primarily, nor theological but imaginative. We may have ever so massive and finely reasoned a theological structure, and we may debate this and that detail of the total argument and come out no nearer together than at the beginning. In a debate on God the minds of the Fundamentalist and the Modernist do not meet. To oppose system against system involves endless and sterile disputation. Our essential differences are in our more or less unconscious foundations, not in our conscious superstructures. These foundations of theology are for the most



part hidden; they are not logical, but psychological, not metaphysical but naive, not expressed but implied. The essential differences in our sophisticated thought about God arise out of the differences in the unsophisticated material of imagination with which our thinking begins. If it were possible to put one's hand through the tangled web of finely woven theological theory and take hold of the uncriticized imagery that is concealed beneath and behind it, we should have in our possession the data upon which to base an intelligent choice between the God of fundamentalism and the God of modernism.

If this be true, it should carry a certain comfort to the reader of these words who, though desiring with deep earnestness to follow a discussion on this greatest of all themes, yet even now is dreading lest the discussion take him into deep waters of logic and metaphysics which either his unfitness or his impatience forbids his entering. Such a reader should know at the outset that an examination of the logical structures of the two theologies under consideration would neither be appropriate in this place nor profitable in any place for the purpose we have set before us. An examination of the imaginative presuppositions of the two views of God is a much simpler undertaking, as it is, in our judgment, a more enlightening one. The fundamentalist view of God arises out of the imagery of a spatial gulf, fixed between man and God. God's coming to man is from somewhere. His abode is yonder, or up there. He is one among many beings—albeit the highest, the supreme—within a spatial universe.

A literal reading of the Scripture, of course, provides ample support for this way of thinking of God. The creation story is anthropomorphic in its entire framework. Its God is a particular being among other beings operating within a spatial situation. The appearances of God to men of ancient times are described as visits of man with man. The imagery of a spatial heaven, or its

equivalent, as the dwelling place of God dominates all ancient thought of God, no less of Old Testament than of pagan thought. Miracles were the intervention of God from the outside, the operation of a *deus ex machina*. Revelation was the deliverance of truth to the mind of man by a divine being who operated through some inscrutable process outside the normal processes of human psychology. In the comprehension and acceptance of such "revealed" truth the ordinary processes of thinking were irrelevant. The ascension of Jesus, the expectation of his return, his present reign at God's right hand, and the holy city of his final triumph all are supported by the framework of spatial relations between the divine and human.

This spatial dualism is the imaginative substance out of which traditional theology has been built. Even in its most abstract and highly logical form the subconscious datum of traditional theology has been the image of a gulf with God on one side and man on the other. Fundamentalism is the heir of this implicit imagery of traditional theology. The clash between modernism and fundamentalism is primarily due to the inability of minds whose thinking has been nourished in the scientific ideas of the past three-quarters of a century to build a system upon this spatial, anthropomorphic dualism. The Modernist squarely fronts the theology built upon the imagery of tradition and declares that no such God exists. With La Place he searches the spatial heavens with his telescope and returns to say that he has found no God there. The imaginative stuff of the Modernist's theology is found elsewhere. He thinks of God in the imagery of concrete moral experience: He does not look away, but within, to find God. And he strives to build his theology upon the imaginative material furnished him by his own spiritual life. Looking within, he finds God. And he finds also a unique point of view from which to look out upon the universe. What he sees when he looks from

within outward is not a God spatially related to man and other beings, but a universe which is itself a living thing. The God whom he discovers is not "outside" of anything, but all things and all selves and all processes are instinct with his presence.

Thus the Modernist cannot rest in any materialistic imagery of God. Yet he goes back to the Scripture—the same Scripture from which the traditionalist derives his anthropomorphic dualism—and by a law of affinity those words which define God in non-spatial, non-anthropomorphic terms, leap from the classic pages and cling to his mind. God is love—God is a spirit—in Him we live and move and have our being—God is light—Is not my dwelling with the humble in heart?—Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?—As thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. Scriptures like these come trooping to the Modernist's mind to interpret and confirm his instinct for finding in the realm of spiritual experience the imagery out of which to build his theory of God. And he is continually meeting in the same Scriptures words of another but kindred sort which interpret the universe itself. "My Father worketh even until now—The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now . . . waiting for the realization of the sons of God —All things work together for good to those who love God." The universe is no dead matter upon which a mighty God, invading it from His outside abode, has left the occasional print of His majestic feet. It is rather a forth-putting of His unfailing, living, gracious presence, and all its processes and laws are but the habits of His creative labor.

In thus presenting the traditional view of God in contrast with the modern view, it is far from our intention to imply that the Scriptures which we have quoted as interpreting the modernist view are not also accepted by the Fundamentalist, just as it is equally far from our

intention to imply that the Scriptures which underlie the Fundamentalist's imagery are denied by the Modernists. Ask a Fundamentalist if he believes that God is love. If he is not affronted at your impertinence he replies that, of course, he does. Ask a Christian Modernist if he believes in the creation story of Genesis. If he is not affronted by your impertinence, he will reply that, of course, he does. The difference between these two is not that one accepts while the other rejects this or that Scripture, but in the use which each makes of this or that sort of Scripture as the basis of his conception of God. The Modernist has his own interpretation of the anthropomorphic Scriptures and the Fundamentalist has his own interpretation of the unalloyed ethical or spiritual Scriptures. For the Modernist the passages containing anthropomorphic and spatial dualism have their place not at the center but on the periphery of his theological interest; just as those passages like "God is love" have their place not at the center but on the periphery of the Fundamentalist's theological interest. To the Fundamentalist love is an attribute of God. To the Modernist love is the very essence of God. The reader will understand that the term "love" is used here as typical of all the spiritual realities suggested by the group of Scriptures cited above, and is so used to avoid circumlocution. The Fundamentalist makes love an ornamental feature of a structure erected out of quite another sort of material. The Modernist can find no other sort of material out of which to erect the structure save love itself. Ethical and mystical experience flings out upon its banks the suggestions of God which the modernist mind is engaged in gathering up and assembling into a theology, a picture of that divine being who is

. . . closer than breathing,  
Nearer than hands and feet.

Other aspects of the difference between fundamentalism's God and the God of modernism must await attention in another issue.

## II.

Our discussion of the fundamentalist and modernist views of God began last week with a consideration of the two sets of imagery with which the two sets of minds begin their thinking. Fundamentalism, heir of the cosmology of the pre-scientific age, thinks of God in an imagery that is spatial and anthropomorphic. A spatial gulf is fixed between the divine and the human. God's dealings with man take place across this gulf either by direct divine invasion of the human world or, in His absence, according to a "plan" which He revealed on the occasions of His special appearances on the human scene. The Modernist finds the material for his imagery in actual human experience, and is unable to use the images that imply the spatial dualism of God and man. This contrast of the spatial against the spiritual is, it was held, essential to an understanding of the inability of the two sets of minds to meet. Fundamentalism feels that the God of modernism is pale, vague, impersonal; while modernism says straight out that the God described or assumed by fundamentalism does not exist at all.

There is another contrast between the two conceptions of God equally sharp and equally important. The traditional idea, of which fundamentalism is the heir, is shot through with legalistic implications based upon a monarchical imagery. In times when political authority was vested in a monarch whose power was underived and irresponsible and whose majesty was supported by a luxurious court and universal reverence, it was inevitable that this most august fact of human society should reflect itself in men's thoughts of God. With all men's minds running toward the king in servile devotion it was but a step beyond the king to the idea of God as the poten-



tate of the universe. Thus from the tribal deity who contested his sovereignty with other tribal deities, to the one King of Kings whose glory filled the heavens, the imagery of the monarch and his court has formed the core and basis of man's conceptions of God. This imagery has been so long established in human thought and has so woven itself into the ritual and poetry of religion, and has so dominated all attempts of man's reason to construct a theological system, that it is most difficult for faith to shake itself free of it.

Fundamentalism accepts this imaginative framework without criticism, and more or less naively builds its theology upon it. Modernism tries to free its thoughts from this monarchical imagery and all the legalism that grows out of it. This is not an easy thing to do. However successful one may be in freeing his theoretical conception of God from the influence of anthropomorphic monarchism, when one turns toward God in the attitude of devotion and worship there is an almost irresistible tendency to conceive him through this ages-old imagery. It is not strange that it is so. For in addition to the survival impetus of this all but universal way of thinking of God in terms of the Supreme Ruler of the universe, and the courtly implications of our worship systems, there is the fact of the perennial presence of childhood in the world for whom the God idea must be clothed with anthropomorphic imagery in order to give it content at all. Probably this ever-present need of childhood for a sensuous picture of God accounts for the inertia of the great masses of men, even in our more highly cultivated societies, in responding to the claim of a higher and more ethical view of deity.

The truth is that the religious thinking of the great majority of men has suffered arrested development. They have grown up, but their view of God has not grown up. Their cosmology and their sociology have undergone a revolution at the hands of modern science, but

the stuff of their theology continues to be a set of images taken from the world order and the social order which science has abandoned. Carrying about with them their childhood conceptions of God it is not strange that they are an easy prey to all sorts of doctrines and systems and expectations which mean nothing at all to those who have tried to bring their thinking of God up to the moral level of their other thinking. They think of God as a monarch enthroned in a far-away heaven issuing decrees and laws and making "covenants" with men. His "will" is revealed in a sacred text whose supernatural origin attests its "authority." This mighty potentate having revealed his laws—which had the effect of making yet more pronounced man's conscious helplessness to save himself from sin—at last devised a "plan of redemption" whereby his son, the heavenly prince, was sent from the court of heaven to abide awhile among men and here enact a drama of divine grace. His birth, his death, his resurrection and his return to the heavenly court were scenes in the divine spectacle by which man was to be convinced of God's purpose and power to save.

The acceptance of the record of this drama as a true revealment of the divine will put the soul in the way of salvation. Innumerable variations have been played upon this central theme in the history of Christian theology. Harsh doctrines of human depravity, of divine vengeance, of the sacrifice of Christ as the purchase price given to Satan by God for the ransom of man's soul, and many others grew up with the retelling of the story in the centuries following its historic enactment; and likewise beautiful doctrines of divine love and yearning, of the princely Actor's gracious character and marvelous speech, of the quality of life which resulted in those who accepted the "plan" and many others were developed upon the central theme. But the body of the drama, its essence and structure, were the conception of a regal God, dwelling remote from man in a heavenly court and

from there devising a drama of salvation to be enacted at a definite spot in history before the eyes of men and carried down the ages with power through their testimony of what they had seen and heard.

It is here that modernism pauses. It cannot think in this imagery. It cannot conceive such a God. It finds no monarchical deity in the universe, nor can it postulate one by faith. A new feeling about monarchs and potentates has seized modern mankind, a new moral insight has been vouchsafed which penetrates the unreality of the whole idea of kingship. The majesty of kings and potentates has toppled amid men's widespread disillusionment. This insight has been signalized by the birth of democracy, whose coming has broken the ancient spell which the glamour of kings and their courts threw over the thoughts of men. The disillusionment reflects itself in the way men think about God. No more can men who think critically allow the imagery of a heavenly monarch to determine their thoughts of spiritual reality. There is no such God, men are now calmly bold to say. And this they say not only without fear of incurring the divine wrath but with the vivid sense that in denying existence to him they are doing honor to the God who really is. If monarchy in human relationships is inferior and unethical, a monarchical God is also inferior and unethical. And those doctrines concerning God's will, his covenants, his modes of operation, his plans which grow out of the monarchical conception of the divine being are, so far forth, fictitious, irrelevant and unethical.

So the modern mind is turning to democracy for imagery with which to conceive God. Just as democracy has stripped from the monarch not only the insignia and glamour but the realities of sovereignty and lodged them in the people's will, so this same movement of the human spirit is turning from the pseudo-majesty of a monarch-God to seek for the divine presence and pur-

Pantheism.

pose in the living world of men. We stand only on the threshold of this great quest. Whither it leads no one yet clearly sees. With what ideas we shall arrive at the end of the day none may guess. But the conviction that our feet are in the right path is profound and inspiring. To let go the imagery of monarchy and to seek for God under the imagery of democracy stirs the blood with high expectation. Gone are all arbitrary decrees, all the lonely, self-contained glory, all the arm's length reach of God across a vast chasm to set up a plan of salvation. Gone, too, is all dramatized grace. For modernism, God's life is eternally self-identified with man's. Christ's real humanity is beyond dispute. The gulf of spatial dualism and of caste dualism between God and man is obliterated. In terms of immanent justice, of inherent truth, of gracious purpose, of creative beauty, of love sharing all our sorrow and hope and sin—yea, sharing our sin!—in thoughts like these men are striving to draw a picture of God as the eternal Democrat whose majesty is symbolized by no courtly throne but by a basin and towel.

This God toward whom the modern spirit is feeling its way is not far off, not up there, but within our life. It is as if we were on the front line of His purposes, and as if He were making progress through our loyalty and our valor. He sees through our eyes, hears through our ears, works through our hands. He has a vast task to do and needs us to help Him. He fails when we fail. He wins when we win. We can disappoint Him. We can thwart Him. We can make His achievements possible. He feeds every faint impulse toward good; indeed our good impulses are His prompting. It is not just our impulses but His will that urges us to holiness. Everything that is good in the world, the forest and flowers, the hills and the sea, the devices of industry, the discoveries of science and the beneficent institutions of society are the work of His hands. And all evil represents the incompleteness or the failure of His work. He has pain and

grief in every impure act of every man, in every immoral, ugly, unsocial, lustful, brutal deed. It grieves Him because it involves Him. He is not outside of the sin regarding it vicariously, but inside it, deflected for the time by it, stained by it Himself, standing partner with the sinner in his sin. He does not flee the sinner, or send some one else to suffer with the sinner, but He remains and shares the sinner's sin until thereby together they cast out the sin and heal its wound.

No such truth has ever come to man equal in importance to that of a God who abides eternally in our human life as Jesus tarried with us in his short span of years. God is doing eternally what Jesus did in the narrow limits of time. He is no remote God, wrapping His regal garments about Him in inaccessible isolation while His son acts out a drama of grace. But all the while God is among us and Christ is the first fruit of what he would do for all.

Great and deep are the problems that arise here. The problem of transcendence and immanence, of the omnipotence and the limitation of God, of the responsibility of an immanent God for evils that spring out of the heart of nature, like earthquakes and storms, as well as for those which inhere in the human scene in which he shares—these problems are beside our present purpose to discuss. Our teachers are themselves working upon them with the diligence of a great passion. We are hardly past the stage of insight. The gathering of the data and the construction and the proof remain for the future. But that mankind is definitely turning its thoughts away from the kind of God whose dealings with men may be stated in the imagery of monarchy is the belief of modernism. Here, definitely, is the source of the difference between modernism and fundamentalism. The two systems begin with two Gods. What one God may logically be expected to do the other God may not do. Therefore the systems clash. Therefore



the debate over this detail or that doctrine is unavailing and sterile until the issue leads back to this basic divergence in the two points of view.

And as for anthropomorphism, no one imagines that we shall be able in our finiteness to outgrow it. The soul's need of symbols as carriers of feeling and purpose is ineradicable, but whereas fundamentalism consents to utilize the symbols of monarchy which the social ethics of our time has discredited, modernism insists that our symbolism, for moral reasons as well as in the interest of truth, must be kept up to the level of our highest ethical thinking. And the imagery of the Father, which Jesus filled with immortal radiance, remains still the richest and purest medium of faith and devotion. This conception modernism insists upon taking seriously, building its theology upon it and testing all other theologies by it.

### FUNDAMENTALISM, MODERNISM AND CHRIST <sup>1</sup>

The key to the essential difference between the fundamentalist view of Jesus and the modernist view is found in the dissimilar attitudes with which the two types of mind approach Him. Fundamentalism comes to the figure of Jesus by the dogmatic route. Modernism approaches him as a fact of history. To the Fundamentalist the significance of Jesus' personality is interpreted by a certain doctrinal framework into which the historic figure is made to fit. This framework consists of the conception of an infallible Bible, a "plan of salvation" which engaged the divine mind from the beginning of time and was revealed by various stages prior to the appearance of Jesus, a series of predictions pointing to certain events in the career of Jesus by fulfilling which at His appearance He could be identified as the promised

<sup>1</sup> From *Christian Century*. 41: 495-7. April 17, 1924.

one and His place in the divine scheme attested, His miraculous birth of a virgin, the miracles which He Himself wrought, His death on the cross, His resurrection, His ascension and His promised return to earth to consummate His mission. Here is an *a priori* framework into which the figure of Jesus is fitted and by which He is to be explained. The system has as its background the messianic concepts with which the Jewish mind of Jesus' day was occupied, plus certain other concepts derived from the writings of Paul.

If one reads the life story of Jesus with this group of ideas in the foreground of his thinking he is able to comprehend the view of Jesus held by fundamentalism. It is necessary, according to fundamentalism, to hold the framework fixed and indisputable in all its details, as much so as is the historic outline of the figure within the frame. This conception of Christ is based upon the assumption that those to whom He originally came, those who therefore were His first interpreters, perceived and interpreted Him with final and unchangeable categories, and that it is necessary, if we are to take Jesus at all, that we shall take their framework of interpretation also. Thus their framework has become a system of control by which a certain way of thinking about Jesus has been invested with the same vitality and authority as that which is imputed to Jesus Himself.

Modernism, from its side, approaching Jesus with utter reverence for His personality, looks with skepticism upon the finality of the system of concepts with which His first interpreters sought to understand Him. It asks questions about these concepts. It wonders whether the category of messiahship as held by later Judaism is either universally valid or universally necessary in order to understand Jesus. It asks whether the *a priori* conception of a scheme of salvation, a drama enacted upon a divinely ordered stage transcending the levels of our common human action, is either necessary or usable for

men today. As for specific predictive prophecies it definitely says that there were no such, and that what have been claimed to be such are survivals in early Christian thinking of the forced and fantastic rabbinical methods of dealing with the ancient scripture. With respect to the virgin birth, modernism raises the question of the origin of the belief, whether it was an authentic literal recital of facts originally from the lips of Mary herself, or a later poetic creation, prompted by the impulse to honor Jesus by giving Him an origin above that of natural human birth. Of His death and resurrection, modernism rejects every dramatic interpretation and insists that their meaning and significance are to be found by seeing them as parts of the total fabric of the altogether real life of Jesus of Nazareth.

That is to say, modernism, in its historical approach to Jesus assumes that the figure of Christ as a fact of history may be loosened from that framework of interpretation peculiar to the mind of the age and place in which He historically appeared and reinterpreted for every age and every place in forms and categories ever fresh and vital. This is an abstract and extreme way of stating modernism's point of view. It may seem to imply that modernism definitely rejects the entire traditional interpretation of Jesus, but such is not necessarily the case. It simply holds that the historical framework of interpretation belongs to a different order from the fact interpreted, and insists that wherever in the interest of truth the classic interpretation needs to be rejected or modified it may be done without lessening the greatness or discounting the authority of Jesus Himself. It is not necessary, that is to say, for Christ to walk through all history wearing the vestments with which men clothed His figure who saw Him first. The universal appeal which He makes to mankind will prompt them to invest His figure with ever fresh meanings by which His unique influence and authority may continue to be exercised upon their lives.

Every reader familiar with the principle of apperception in modern psychology will readily understand this difference between fundamentalism and modernism. Modernism protests that it is both unnecessary and impossible to take over bodily the apperception mass of early Christianity. There is nothing necessarily divine or authoritative or final about this apperception mass. And it is our first duty, says modernism, conceptually to separate the historic fact of Christ from the implications of the early apperception of Him and to interpret Him in the terms of our own apperception. No, says fundamentalism; the early interpretation is inseparable from the historic fact interpreted; the apperception of Jesus by those who saw Him first was divine, authoritative and final; it cannot be even conceptually separated from the fact of Him without disloyalty; it must therefore be kept intact as a system of control over the historic fact of Christ, and itself made co-equal with His personality as an object of faith.

This is the root difference between fundamentalism and modernism as to their respective views of Christ. If we confine our consideration of modernism to Christian modernism, in the evangelical sense, as we do in these chapters, it is clear that in its profession of faith in the historic person named Jesus Christ modernism holds a "Christology" that is every whit as "high" as that of fundamentalism, though it does not state its profession in the terms employed by fundamentalism. In loosening the figure of Jesus from its older framework modernism provides a framework that exalts the figure no less than does the frame handed down by tradition, albeit the modernist frame is of another design. How then does modernism approach Jesus? It tries to rid its path of all dogmatic prepossessions, and by historical investigation and criticism to set free the actual person of Christ so that He may stand forth and speak for Himself. This it has succeeded in doing during the past half century with a singleness of purpose and thorough-

ness of method that have given our generation a more realistic understanding of the historic figure of Christ than any generation has enjoyed since the last apostle died. The result of this vast labor in archaeology and history and literary criticism has been to strip away many accretions of the centuries and to give men of our world the virgin sense of meeting Jesus for the first time.

And the significant thing is that this scholarly process, controlled not by sentiment but by the scientific spirit of the search for objective fact, has resulted not only in an intensified interest in the person of Jesus but in a marvelous enhancement of His significance for mankind. There has never been a time in Christian history when the warm presence of Jesus in the hearts of men and the urgent mandate of His will in the consciences of men were so vividly felt and so gladly acknowledged as right now. And yet there was never a time when the traditional apologetic on His behalf was so unsatisfying. The old framework by which the divinity of Jesus has been envisaged and demonstrated is either rejected or regarded with indifference by virtually all typically modern minds, whether learned or unlearned. But Christ Himself, surviving the old thought systems which have lost their vitality, is more vital than ever. For with the freeing of the historical Jesus from the clutter of ecclesiastical ritualism and Christian dogma, men seem to see a figure whom they cannot leave in the framework of the dead past; He seems to demand the fresh investiture of His person with the forms and patterns of modern life.

Modernism has not yet fashioned such an interpretation of Him. We have no rationalized apologetic that can be set over against the framework of Jewish messianism and traditional orthodoxy. We are too near our new discovery of Him. The shock of His so recent coming among us is both absorbing and confusing. It is as if our age were another Sea of Galilee, and while we were engaged busily in mending our nets on the shore, Jesus



stood beside us and bade us leave all and follow Him. So startling is His modern coming! Our surprise is like that of the sons of Zebedee. We do not yet know what to make of Him. But the same confused motives and the same wistful yielding to His call mark our present contact with Him as they marked the initial contact of those whom He met at the seaside long ago. The parallel is profoundly apt. For the really vital relation of Jesus to modern life can best be stated in terms analogous to those of the Galilean and Judean ministry. Who He is is hidden from us. Not only does He not urge upon us any title or definition of His person, but we as yet have no impulse to label or explain Him. We are too deeply drawn and held by *Him*, by the charm and dignity of His person, by the cryptic translucence of His speech, by the sense that here in His spirit and on His lips is the answer to all the problems and needs of our world.

Mayhap, some day, two or three of His closest disciples will go with Him to another Caesarea Philippi and He will be transfigured before their eyes. There will then begin the formulation of a grand explanation of His personality—who He is, and what His place in the vast evolutionary process of humanity. And mayhap from some fiery-tongued Pentecost the insight vouchsafed to the elect two or three at Caesarea will be spread abroad as a conquering gospel through all the world. But to that stage we have not yet come. Ours is the more modest, the more human—perhaps it is also the more ineffable—lot to walk with Him through fields of corn and city streets, to sit in temple porches or on the lilled hillside, while He talks to us of the coming of His kingdom of justice and truth and peace. We listen, charmed and convinced—yet not understanding!

Fundamentalism says that modernism lacks definiteness of doctrine. To the truth of which charge modernism makes ready confession. And it adds that it is better far to follow Christ though unable to explain Him, while waiting upon the Father in heaven to reveal an

explanation, than to accept from flesh and blood an explanation that is already dead or one that is premature. This unhurried theological pace of modernism which so exasperates the lawyers and pharisees is as natural as the contentment of the twelve while Jesus was with them. His present authority was never in doubt. It was not an authority that flowed from some accepted doctrine or explanation of His person. It had no legalistic or metaphysical sanction. It was *de facto*. He simply exercised it. They simply felt it and yielded to it. Why should it be otherwise now? As a matter of fact, it is not otherwise. Those who are taking Jesus most seriously in the really serious business of life—those who are trying to follow Him in industry, in statecraft, in international relations and in all avenues and areas of the social order—are less concerned to explain His person than to understand His mind, more desirous of yielding to His authority than of philosophising about His divinity. In this, according to the teaching of Jesus Himself about doing the will of God as a way of knowing the doctrine, modernism would seem to be more truly Christian than fundamentalism.

But modernism makes a still further reply. Why, it asks, should those who follow Christ be so concerned with Him as a problem to be explained? Why not accept Him for what He is, the supreme moral fact of our human world? Fundamentalism says that we cannot get to the moral fact of Him except through the doctrine—through a literally infallible Bible which tells the story of Him, through a divinely revealed messianic dogma which determines His place in history, through a miraculous birth which certifies that this is the one who was promised as the redeemer of Israel, through miracles of His own working and through the resurrection of His physical body from the tomb. Fundamentalism says that if we weaken this framework at any point, the figure within the frame will surely disappear. But modernism says

that this simply is not so. We do as a matter of fact reach the majestic presence of Jesus without the aid of all this paraphernalia of dogma. Indeed, His presence and His authority were never so vitally acknowledged as since men began to doubt or lose interest in these dogmas.

So modernism asks again, why turn Jesus into a problem? After all, even on the basis of orthodoxy, there is something ironical in all this elaborate Christology with which the church has engaged itself since the beginning. God is really the problem. Is there a God? What is His nature? How may I know Him and serve Him? These are the real problems of life and of religion. And to them Jesus is the *answer!* Yet traditional religion has not only made of Him its chief problem but has actually sought to solve Him in terms of a primary problem! This is precisely what the age-long controversy over the divinity of Christ means—an attempt to settle one problem by translating it into the terms of a greater problem. The real issue in religion is not the divinity of Christ, but the Christianity of God. God is the great “X” in the equation of life and Christ is the given quantity. Show us the Father, cries the human heart, and it sufficeth us. He that hath seen Me, says Jesus, hath seen the Father. God is like Jesus—that is the gospel! It is no gospel to insist that Jesus is like God, for we are describing the known in the terms of the unknown. It is no gospel to say that Jesus is the son of God—taking these words literally—but it is a gospel of immeasurable glory to say that God is the Father of Jesus. We solve the unknown God by the known Jesus. But we are mocked when our answer is made our problem.

It is this fact-character of Jesus which sets Him in vital connection with modern life. We are not so sure of any metaphysical or doctrinal demonstration as our fathers were, even though we can find no flaws in the reasoning. But the claim of Jesus that God is His Father has

a way of demonstrating itself altogether congenial to our modern tests of truth. That is the practical way of taking Him in earnest and seeing what happens. It is the way of experiment, of moral adventure, backed and prompted by high hope and a bit of reason, but not proved to be rational until tried out in experience. We have witnessed through the centuries in the personal inner life of millions of men a demonstration of the truth of Christ's claim to bring the peace and grace and power of God to the human spirit. And we are witnessing today the beginnings of an attempt, on a grand scale to test God's fatherhood of Jesus by trying out in the wide ranges of our economic, political, international and social life whether the nature of things will support and sustain a human world built upon the foundation of that mind which was in Christ Jesus. The full majesty of Jesus, thus, is no static achievement of metaphysics, as fundamentalism insists; it still waits for its true demonstration. And the proof rests not so much with our logicians and scholars, as with those of us who in simple faith with earnest hearts lend willing and untiring hands to the building of that kingdom in which His will is done on earth as it is in heaven.

## WE MUST FOLLOW JESUS, NOT PAUL<sup>1</sup>

That Jesus of Nazareth spent His public life in giving to the Twelve a teaching that He declared to be the Way of Life; and that He had no sooner left the world than from His state in glory He straightway deputed another man to be His chief accredited organ; and that through this new mouthpiece He proceeded to set aside the chief part of what He had taught during His lifetime, substituting for His simple ethics a complicated group of theological speculations, so as to make a sys-

<sup>1</sup> By Henry C. Vedder, professor in Crozer Theological Seminary. *The Fundamentals of Christianity*. p. 148-50, 235. Copyright (1922), The Macmillan Company, New York. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.



tem of theology the gospel, instead of a proclamation of the Kingdom of God—this is a hypothesis so fantastic, so lacking in all elements of credibility, that one marvels how it could find a sane advocate anywhere. Who can credit that the heavenly Christ taught through Paul something so different from what the early Jesus taught the Twelve? Can we, if we would, regard the Gospels and the Pauline epistles as literary products or thought products of the same personality?

It is a historical fact, of course, that the entire church of the following centuries proceeded to substitute Paul for Jesus, as the authoritative teacher of Christianity. For "the truth as it is in Jesus" the Fathers taught the truth as it is in Paul. But they did this without consciousness of what they were doing, never attempting dogmatic justification for their conduct. . . . Paul's teaching was quietly put in place of the teaching of Jesus. Not one of the great theologians of the church—Athanasius, Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Melancthon, Calvin—drew any considerable part of his doctrine from the words of Jesus. All without exception, Catholic or Protestant, are expounders of Paul. . . .

From the time of Constantine it was held that the promise of Jesus to send to His disciples the Spirit of Truth, had been fulfilled in such wise that the voice of the church was the voice of Christ. A vast spiritual despotism was gradually built on the basis of that falsehood, and it required the great convulsion of the sixteenth century to win once more for Christian men a measure of that liberty wherewith Christ made us free. Now some would build a new spiritual despotism on the claim that the voice of Paul is the voice of Christ. In our day pure religion must do battle for the principle that the voice of Christ was heard once for all in the words of Jesus, and that all other pretended voices of Christ are delusion or sham. . . .

. . . It has clearly appeared in the course of our discussions that Jesus and Paul give us quite different ideas



of God. These ideas are so very different that inferences cannot be drawn from both of them combined, while inferences drawn from either taken by itself lead to conclusions so unlike that at times they can hardly be recognized as referring to the same God. The two philosophies that result from taking Jesus or Paul as fundamental authority regarding God are at variance almost as radically as any form of Christianity differs from Buddhism. Historic Christianity has followed Paul. It is the main object of this book<sup>1</sup> to convince readers that the Christianity of the future must follow Jesus.

### LIBERALIZING THE FUNDAMENTALIST MOVEMENT<sup>2</sup>

Anyone interested in a study of the significant groups in contemporary American life is forced to the regrettable observation that in the church Bourbon reaction and blind credulity furnish most of the effective evangelism and father virtually all of the widely popular movements, as witness the current fundamentalist movement, which is compelling the church to squander in guerilla warfare between its own members precious energies that should be employed in the prosecution of its basic mission. It is nothing less than tragic that liberalism invariably allows itself to be manœvered by reaction into a defensive position. I have often wondered why Bourbons seem to have so much better sense of generalship than liberals. Perhaps it is because they have all their energy left for strategy. However gray-minded they may be in other ways, the standpatters have an uncanny facility for capturing the effective catchword. It would be difficult to imagine a more nearly irresistible rallying-cry than the word "fundamentalism."

<sup>1</sup> That is, of course, of Professor Vedder's book, not of this handbook.

<sup>2</sup> By Glenn Frank. *Century*. 106: 637-40. August, 1923.

The man in the street has a veritable passion for "going back to the fundamentals of the thing." He likes to feel that he is "getting down to bed-rock." Whether consciously or unconsciously, the fundamentalist movement, from the point of view of popular psychology, has been admirably staged. The high art of sloganeering is here seen at its best. The Fundamentalists have succeeded in giving the liberal and intelligent leaders of the church the appearance of renegades who are sniping the church from the ramparts.

The liberal movement in the church is weakest in its sense of strategy. The right is on its side, but the right is being badly stage-managed. The success of the fundamentalist movement would mean the conversion of the church into a Hall of Dead Doctrines presided over by Pious Ignorance. The success of the liberal movement would mean the conversion of the church into an inspiring and energizing force of contemporary civilization. But the liberal movement will not succeed as long as the liberals wage a merely defensive warfare against the detailed contentions of the fundamentalist program. The liberal movement will succeed only when the liberals spend their energies in the organization of a liberal fundamentalist movement that will put the reactionaries on the defensive—a movement that will beat the Fundamentalists at their own game of catchwords and mob psychology. All the necessary raw materials for a liberal fundamentalist movement lie ready at hand.

I should like to suggest fourteen points that I think should be included in the program of any such liberal fundamentalist movement. I think that liberal leadership should challenge the church to do the following things:

#### I.—SUBSTITUTE THE RELIGION OF JESUS FOR CHRISTIANITY

I am not merely playing with words here. Most intelligent folk realize, I think, that three-fourths of our

traditional theological doctrine bear little, if any, direct relation to the religion of Jesus. If Jesus were to return to earth, I doubt that He would be able to recognize either His purpose or His program in the average theological treatise. Hounded free-lance that he was, berated, betrayed, and beaten by the Fundamentalists of His own time, Jesus would be ill at ease in reading the theological pronouncements of that over-doctrinized and over-formalized Christianity which has for centuries usurped the place, misinterpreted the principles, and maladministered the influence of His essentially simple religion, which was and is not only personally regenerative, but socially revolutionary.

## II.—MAKE FAITH A MATTER OF ADVENTURE RATHER THAN A MATTER OF ASSENT

Too often faith has been made a synonym for credulity. When some one says that John Smith is a man of great faith, we are accustomed to think that this means that John Smith is a man marked chiefly by the fact that he is willing to believe any widely accepted doctrine provided it was formulated enough centuries ago and its authors look antique enough in the steel engravings. In such case, it would be more accurate to say that John Smith is a man of great cowardice. The man of great faith is the man who has such confidence in the essential rightness of the universe that he is willing to adventure outside the little circle of the white light of the known that falls about his feet. Throughout history the men of greatest faith have not been conformists, but pioneers.

## III.—PREACH THE GOSPEL OF JESUS RATHER THAN THE GOSPEL ABOUT JESUS

The distinction here is too obvious to require explanation. I want only to record this personal impression: in at least eight times out of ten that I listen to an orthodox sermon I leave the church with the feeling that

I have listened to a man discuss a historical something that happened some nineteen hundred years ago. The gospel about Jesus may be intellectually interesting, but it lacks power to motivate the contemporary world. The gospel *about* Jesus makes a minister the calm expositor of a doctrinal form; the gospel *of* Jesus makes a minister the impassioned advocate of a dynamic force.

#### IV.—APPLY AS WELL AS ANNOUNCE THE PRINCIPLES OF THE RELIGION OF JESUS

The mere personal recommendation of the sermon on the mount and the golden rule does not constitute an adequate message to the modern man. The church must add to the preaching of abstract virtues and personal spiritual experience an intimate, continuous, and specific moral analysis of all the political, social, industrial, and professional processes of modern society. Today a business or professional man can lie, steal, take life, and despoil virtue in a thousand indirect, impersonal, and long-distance ways that never occurred to Moses when he announced the ten commandments—ways the moral implications of which it is not always easy for a man to recognize. Now the minister, if he is anything, must be an expert in the moral meaning of modern life. The religion of Jesus must function today in a changed world, and it is the business of the church to show men what the religion of Jesus means in terms of life in modern America rather than in ancient Palestine.

#### V.—ASK MEN TO BELIEVE ONLY WHAT THEY CAN USE, ONLY WHAT IS TRUE FOR THEM

The religion of Jesus is not a philosophy to be intellectually believed; it is a way of life. To borrow a phrase from educational theory, in the matter of religion we live our way into our thinking more than we think our way into our living. Intellectual assent to a doctrine means exactly nothing to me unless that "belief"

actually does something to my character or my conduct. No truth is mine until I have lived it. In a very real sense I cannot accept the religion of another. That I am intellectually convinced that it is true does not make it true; it becomes true *for me* only after it saturates me so that waking or sleeping it colors my life. And I am reminded that it was only after His little personal cabinet of twelve associates had been His disciples for many months that Jesus catechized them to find out who they thought He was. He let them come to their conclusion about His character by living and working with Him; He did not demand that they hold a certain opinion as a sort of entrance requirement to discipleship.

#### VI.—MODERNIZE THE RELIGIOUS VOCABULARY

The men who wrote the books of the Bible used the language-forms of their own time. Religious leadership is not, in the main, following their lead. The church today needs to scrap its ancient vocabulary and begin to talk to the men of this generation in language-forms and thought-forms that the men of this generation can readily understand without having to leap backward over nineteen centuries and convert themselves into ancient Orientals in order to decode the similes and metaphors that fall strangely on Occidental ears and insulate the religion of Jesus from vital contact with the modern mind.

#### VII.—EMPHASIZE THE USE OF SCIENCE BY RELIGION RATHER THAN THE RECONCILIATION OF SCIENCE TO RELIGION

The Fundamentalist seems to regard science and religion as two distinct entities, like two prize-fighters who had been striking below the belt and were being asked to apologize and shake hands. Science is not an entity that we can personalize as either devil or deity:



it is a compound of a thousand and one specific results. The problem of religious leadership is not that of passing judgment on science as an entity, but the problem of making intelligent use of the new truths unearthed by psychology, biology, and kindred sciences.

#### VIII.—DRAMATIZE RATIONALISM WITH RITUAL AND BEAUTY

It is regrettable that when ministers become rational and liberal in their understanding of the religion of Jesus they tend to denude their church service of that ritual and richness which the human sense of festival and hunger for beauty demand. The average liberal church service does not stimulate the imagination and satisfy the legitimate emotions of the masses. Protestantism unwisely threw away much of its cultural and artistic birthright in its revolt from Catholicism. That there is a basic difference in certain doctrines between the Catholic and the Protestant church is no reason why Protestantism should renounce ritual and exile beauty from its life.

#### IX.—KNOW GOD AS THE MIND AND THE HEART OF THE UNIVERSE RATHER THAN AS ITS JUDGE

To think of God as immanent in His creation, alive and breathing in every atom of His universe, is not a reversion to primitive pantheism that peopled the world with a medley of gods, turning tree and stone and waterfall into a divinity; it is not an atheistic attempt to materialize the spiritual, but rather the spiritualization of the material. It does not even preclude the personality of God. I do not know where *I* am in my body. I am in my hand when I want to lift something. I am in my tongue when I want to speak. My mind and imagination travel through the lead and wood of my pencil, flow in the ink of my pen, or crawl along the

metallic bars of my typewriter as I write. And yet I am a personality. I can approach a God who is in like manner the mind and heart of the universe as I could never approach a God who was patterned after an Oriental despot and functioned primarily as a police judge.

X.—MAKE THE CHURCH THE VOICE OF THE LIVING  
AS WELL AS THE DEAD PROPHETS

The Hebrew race holds no monopoly on inspiration, and prophecy did not die with Isaiah and Micah. Mr. Wells was no impious iconoclast when he suggested that we should bring together a new "Bible of Civilization." We need such a synthesis of the modern mind's reachings after ultimate meanings not to supplant, but to supplement the Bible.

XI.—BREAK THE CHAINS THAT NOW BIND THE  
CHURCH TO THE STATE

We have been under the delusion that we have effected a separation of church and state. We have not. We have *de jure* separation, but *de facto* union of church and state. In times of crisis, when the state barks, the church barks, and straightway begins to hunt with the pack. Let war be declared, and the church makes its God the ally alike of Pershing and Hindenburg.

XII.—DEFINE SIN AS ANYTHING THAT HURTS LIFE  
RATHER THAN SOMETHING THAT OFFENDS GOD

Only so can sin become, in the mind of the average man, a moral rather than a legalistic issue. A God worthy of the worship of intelligent men does not spend His time nursing His dignity and watching for infractions of a set of rules. He is pained only when something poisons or prostitutes His handiwork.

### XIII.—MAKE THE "SCHEME OF REDEMPTION" TAKE INTO ACCOUNT INSTITUTIONS AS WELL AS INDIVIDUALS

The religion of Jesus has something to say to society as well as to the soul. It is as much concerned with the reconstruction of the social order as it is with the redemption of the individual. In the mind of Jesus there was no contradiction between personal and social religion. There is no such thing as the "spiritual" gospel and the "social" gospel being offered to mankind as alternatives.

### XIV.—MERGE THE SACRED AND THE SECULAR

Traditional theology has blighted life with a dangerous dualism that has made religion consist in the doing of special things. The religion of Jesus is not the doing of special things, but the doing of all things in a special way. Spirituality is not "a something" that life uses; it is the tone and quality of life as a whole.

I offer these as suggestions only, not as a complete program. I have left out many really fundamental things. I have been interested only in suggesting a method of approach.

### THE RELIGION OF A LIBERAL CHRISTIAN<sup>1</sup>

Why is it that Christian people—and even those who might not venture to call themselves Christians—seem never nearer to one another than when they are singing together the best of the old hymns?

The music has something to do with it. Memory and old association have a part in it. But there is another reason. *The really fine hymns have no theological definitions in them. They utter pure emotion in the language of simple faith.*

"How firm a foundation," "Jesus, lover of my soul."

<sup>1</sup> By Henry van Dyke. Outlook. 136: 177-8. January 30, 1924.

"Jerusalem the golden," "Lead, kindly light," "Jesus, the very thought of Thee," "There's a wideness in God's mercy," "Abide with me"—these are hymns that lift and strengthen our hearts and bring us into harmony with all who love and seek God. While we sing them we do not ask whether they were written by Catholics or Protestants, Fundamentalists or Modernists. We are "compassed about with songs of deliverance" (Psalm xxxii: 7).

The sharp doctrinal controversy which is now disturbing so many of the churches may possibly have some good results. (Almost everything that happens in this mixed world has that possibility.) If it should lead to a closed and more intelligent study of the Bible, a better understanding of Christian history, a clearer conviction that there is no antagonism between reverent science and reasonable religion, that would surely be good.

But the trouble is, at least for the present, that the unhappy features of the controversy are more in evidence than its possible benefits. In the first place, it starts out with two vague, pretentious, and misleading names. That method of procedure leads to nothing—except strife.

What are the Fundamentalists? "We are the people," they answer, "who are trying to keep religion on its old foundations and build up the faith once for all delivered to the saints." Undoubtedly that is true of many of them—men of piety and sincerity and goodwill. But it is not true of all who use this name, certainly not of those who are openly trying to drive out of the church all who will not accept their precise definitions of dogma. To these men we say: "You are not really Fundamentalists at all. You assert authority to lay down the essential tests of faith for others, disregarding Christ who says 'Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out;' disregarding St. Paul, who declares that no man can lay any other foundation than Jesus Christ.

You are 'New Foundationists.' We don't want to cast you out; we believe in a comprehensive Church of Christ the divine Saviour; and we firmly claim the right to stay in it, in spite of the fact that we can't accept your definitions."

What are the Modernists? The name, I believe, came into general use during a controversy in the Catholic Church in the nineteenth century. It is a foolish and footless name. Some to whom it is applied are, no doubt, unbelievers in any divine revelation, unbelievers in Christ as God manifest in the flesh; they accept no superhuman mystery in religion, nothing that is not new, but nevertheless they try to serve humanity in honest love. For these men I have no enmity, but sympathy, and a special admiration when they say that they can no longer claim the name of Christians.

But others who are called Modernists are in a different class. They take the Bible as a true record of man's search for God and God's progressive revelations to man; not an inerrant text-book of science and history, but a sure guide of faith and conduct. They adore Christ and try to follow him, as the Son of God and the Son of Man, the divine Redeemer who lived and died to save the world from sin; but they do not press for a clinical explanation of the mode of his incarnation. They rather dislike the materialistic tone of many of these curious genealogical inquiries. They do not think them essential to a true faith in Christ as the supreme Revealer of God and Saviour of men.

Now what sense is there in grouping these two types of teaching under one name as "Modernist?" They are much farther apart than the moderate conservative and the reasonable progressive. It is the "falsehood of extremes," the bitterness of irreconcilables, that makes all the trouble in the church.

Why not sweep away these two silly and misleading names, "Fundamentalists" and "Modernists?" They only becloud the issue and confuse the mind of the plain



folks. The real difference (which I pray may not become a division) is between the *literalists*, who interpret the Scripture according to the letter, and the *liberals*, who interpret according to the spirit.

We liberals have no wish to exclude the literalists from the church. But the literalists are more warlike. They say the liberals must go out. Among the Presbyterians a few men plainly say the church must be divided and the literalists left in possession of the endowments. Now this proposition (which has a certain commercial flavor) is definitely schismatic—that is to say, it seeks to split the church.

But there is another thing that must strike the plain man who likes to take words in their ordinary sense. The so-called “five points of essential doctrine”<sup>1</sup> which are put forth by the literalists as tests of Christian faith are not consistent with one another.

Take an example. The first point is the absolute freedom of the Scriptures from error of any kind. The second point is the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, as told in the Gospels according to Matthew and Luke. Now suppose a plain man accepts this story as it is told, and believes, as I do, in the virgin birth. Then he reads on and finds (Luke ii: 33) that Joseph and Mary are distinctly called “*the father and the mother*” of Jesus. Then he turns back and finds (Matthew i: 16) that the descent of Jesus from David and Abraham is definitely traced through *Joseph*. Now what is the plain man, taking language in its obvious sense, to do? Either he must give up the doctrine of the virgin birth, or he must hedge and qualify his statement that the Holy Scriptures are absolutely free from error, or he must say, as the liberals do: “Such material discrepancies mean nothing to us. We interpret Scripture, not by the letter, but by the spirit. Anyway, we believe that Jesus Christ is our God and Saviour.”

It would be easy to go on showing, in the same way, that the five points of the literalists are neither self-

<sup>1</sup> See p. 21.

consistent, nor adequate as statements of the truth taught in the Bible, nor binding as "essential doctrines." But to what purpose? It would only make confusion worse confounded.

The second unhappy feature of the Fundamentalists' strife is its tendency to delay and obstruct the practical work of the church. This conflict diverts attention and effort from Christian service to dogmatic definitions. Christ said, "By their fruits shall ye know them." St. James said that faith was proved by works. Doing good in obedience to Christ is the ultimate test of orthodoxy.

The third unhappy feature of this literalists' attack upon the liberals is the distraction and anxiety which it causes in the mind of very simple Christian folks. They are my folks. With all who can sing "Jesus, lover of my soul" from the heart, and then rise up to do good in the world, I am in fellowship. Let us not be dismayed. Christ will save us and give us the victory.

The friend who asked me to write this paper requested me to imagine myself "standing on a soap-box, addressing a mixed crowd." Well, I have often done practically that very thing, and in each case have found it necessary to speak directly to the people who were there, according to their various human needs and desires of soul.

But three things seem to me to belong to the Everyman Gospel, and somehow or other the Christian preacher, on the soap-box or in the pulpit, ought to try to get them over to his brother-man, rich or poor, learned or simple.

First, God made us all. We are not the children of chance, the offspring of senseless matter and blind force. The Great Spirit is the framer of our bodies and the Father of our spirits. Lift up your hearts. Our bodies come from dust, but our souls from God. Let us live bravely, not as mere beasts, but as men and women, children of God.

Second, there is something wrong with all of us, something which makes it easier to go down than to go up, and to indulge our passions rather than to follow our conscience. The Bible tells us, and our hearts know, what that evil thing is. It is sin, selfishness, which separates us from our Father in heaven and from our brother-men on earth, and makes all the trouble in the world. We must escape from it, get rid of its guilt and its power, if we want peace and a better life.

Third, there is only one person who can deliver us, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He came from heaven, and lived a sinless life as the Son of man, and died upon the cross to save the world from sin. He rose from the dead to bring immortality to light. He is one with the Father. God is like Christ. He is love, forgiveness, mercy, truth. Every one who wants to may come to this Saviour. If you believe in Him, He will give you a new life. If you trust Him, He will give you the peace that is everlasting. If you honestly try to obey Him in being good and doing good, that will be the test and proof of your true faith. There is no other. Try this. You don't need to swallow a volume of theological definitions. Simply come to Jesus, trust Him fully, follow Him honestly, and you shall be saved. That is Gospel truth.

### WHY CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIANITY IS MORE POPULAR <sup>1</sup>

Religious conservatism, for all its stern terminology of divine anger, narrow ways, and strait <sup>2</sup> gates, presents Christianity primarily as a comfort, as a means of getting off rather cheaply by the simple device of being sorry and believing something. Religious liberalism challenges men to an adventurous quest for the ultimate realities of life.

<sup>1</sup> By Glenn Frank. William Jennings Bryan, a Mind Divided Against Itself. Century. 106: 795. September, 1923.

<sup>2</sup> The original has "straight," which must be an inadvertent error.

## E. AN ATTACK ON BOTH PARTIES

### THE SHAME OF THE CHURCHES <sup>1</sup>

The clergy of the various Protestant churches and more especially the clergy of the Protestant Episcopal church during the past few weeks have been acting in such wise as to grieve their friends and to amuse their enemies. If the clergy, high and broad, are conspiring together to bring their church into contempt and to destroy its influence, they are displaying an efficiency in their efforts that might well excite the envy of the successful business man. It is difficult for anyone of ordinary intelligence and common decency to retain a shred of respect for either party in this disgraceful quarrel.

When one hears the clergy shouting one to another, "I do believe" . . . "I do not believe in the virgin birth," one is not so much troubled by their orthodoxy or their heterodoxy as one is amazed at their bad manners. Matters which cultivated men and women take for granted or veil in decent phrase are unblushingly cried from the pulpit. I am sure if these reverend gentlemen could realize how their cries offend modest ears they would themselves blush for very shame. As they reveal themselves in this contention one deplores in the clergy not only their lack of reserve in the treatment of delicate subjects but more their seeming deficiency in intellectual discernment, their lack of spiritual insight, and their apparent ignorance of historical conclusions which for more than half a century have been the possession of every fairly educated man and woman.

It is plain that in these birth stories we are dealing not with prosaic history but with myth and legend. A

<sup>1</sup> By Algernon S. Crapsey. Nation. 118: 53-4. January 16, 1924.

myth is a story told to shepherds by shepherds as they watch their flocks by night. A legend is the same story in poetical form, reduced to writing and recited by a prophet in the temple. History is the same story delivered as a lecture by a professor in a classroom. Of these three forms the last is the least vital. As Shultz says in his "Old Testament Theology;" "When we read the myths and legends of a people we have our fingers on the pulse and our ear on the heart of that people." The bishops may have been childish to take the birth stories literally, but the broad churchman is stupid not to take them at all. Through all the Christian ages, the Song of the Angels has been the carol of the children, and the coming of the wise men the comfort of the weary and heavy-laden. In these birth stories is the germ thought of a world beyond the world, without which our world were very sad and desolate. But the instant we remove these stories from their home in mythology into the sphere of literal history we destroy their charm and make of them mere stories for the nursery. The very same story, in its essentials, is told of Augustus Caesar. It is said that one day his mother, Maia, went into the temple to pray and as she prayed a serpent glided into the temple and embraced her and she conceived and the child who was born of that conception in due time became the Emperor Augustus, the master of the world.

These myths were the natural product of the pious imagination of the worshipers of Augustus and the worshipers of Jesus. The Romans thought it impious to think of Augustus as the grandson of a Roman baker, nor could the Christian kneel in adoration before the son of a Galilean carpenter. The quarrel of the highs and the broads over the birth stories is a quarrel of the childish with the stupid. With the high churchman it is the outcome of a lack of intelligence; with the broad churchman a lack of feeling.



The deepest disgrace of this quarrel between the High Church, as represented by the bishop of New York, and the Broad Church, whose chief spokesman is the rector of the Church of St. Bartholomew, is that it is practically a quarrel about nothing. The bishop says Jesus is to him very God of very God; the rector says that Jesus is to him his divine Lord and Master. Such being the case, it would seem the sacred duty of the bishop to obey his God and of the rector to follow his divine Lord and Master. And if the bishop did obey his God and if the rector did follow his divine Lord and Master, would not these two meet in the midst of the stern moralities and severe spiritualities of the Sermon on the Mount, and meeting there must they not each fall down on his knees and cry, the bishop to his God, the rector to his Lord and Master: "Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner?"

From that high altitude would not the sinful futility of his cathedral building be manifest to the bishop? Would he not see that to get the wherewithal to build his cathedral he must be careful not to offend the landlords and the money-lords of the city. Looking down from Morningside Heights he would see landlords exacting exorbitant rents for tenements unfit for human habitation; he would see pale, anemic women climbing darkened stairways to sleep in the fetid atmosphere of unventilated rooms; he would see weary workmen heavily slumbering in the same bed with wife and children; he would see the crowded tenements, the breeding place of sexual vice in its fouler forms of sodomy and incest.

And going to the Stock Exchange, the bishop would see the money-lords by the manipulations of the market robbing the innocent, impoverishing the widow and the orphan, and giving the tithe of these ungodly gains to the building and support of his cathedral.

It would then come home to the bishop as a student of history that in every age the building of temples and

cathedrals has been the cardinal crime of the bishops and the priests. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries when the bishops were exhausting the labor of the people in the building of the cathedrals the people themselves were living in wattle huts without window or chimney, frightened by the dark and smothered by the smoke. It was the sale of indulgences for sin to raise the money to pay for the building of the greatest of all cathedrals, the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome, that roused the wrath of Luther, causing him to hurl his anathema at this wickedness and create the great schism in the church.

One single night spent by the bishop of New York alone on the mount of the sermon would, if he has any intelligence, any heart, any soul, make him ashamed and afraid and his quarrel with the rector of St. Bartholomew's would be as nothing in comparison with his quarrel with his own soul.

But the rector of St. Bartholomew's is in a still more perilous condition. It was easy for the rector of St. Bartholomew's to defy the bishop; St. Bartholomew's is the richest single congregation in Christendom; it is the church of the American millionaire and billionaire, and the rector knew that the bishop fears the millionaire and the billionaire more than he fears his God; so the rector was not afraid of his bishop. But the rector was and is afraid of his own congregation; he would never dare defy the millionaires and billionaires as he defied his bishop. He would never dare to tell the millionaires and billionaires to their face that the mere possession of the millions and billions was evidence of their godlessness; if they had not loved their money more than they loved their God they would not have had their money. This rector would never dare to tell his congregation that in living a life of wasteful idleness upon money which they had never earned they were more guilty than the wretched woman of the street who sells her body for her bread.

I know that vast sums of accumulated wealth are expended in these days for the betterment of the race. But the prime social question is not what a man does with his money but how did he get it. If like the Roman generals and the robber barons of the Middle Ages he gets it by the wasting of the land, the pillage of cities, the enslavement of the people, it matters nothing if he builds a temple to Jupiter or a Christian cathedral. What the world demands today is not charity in the modern sense, but justice.

Liberal Christianity and orthodox Christianity are equally responsible for the world as it is. They equally stand sponsor for the capitalistic, militaristic system which now rules the world. They equally hate the pacifist-communist mode of life which Jesus preached and practiced and under the rule of which the Christian community carried on its work for the first four hundred years of its history and conquered the world. In those days of greatness there was a distinction between the church and the world; the world hated the church and the church defied the world. Today there is not the slightest distinction between the church and the world unless it be that the world is master and the church the slave.

The capitalist, militarist, political system has in the past ten years made the church *particeps criminis* in the slaughter, with unspeakable cruelties, of from fifteen to twenty million of the choicest men of this generation. And the capitalist, militarist system, having the church in bondage, goes on with its exploitation of the people as if these twenty million were all dead and done for. But they are not dead and done for. Such a crime must inevitably have a penalty. As Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem, seeing in its present sin its future downfall, so the sensitive soul stands aghast at the awful plight of western, so-called Christian civilization, foreseeing in its present evil its future disaster. And in

view of this vision, the squabbling bishop and rector are as if they were two French nobles in the days of the Revolution, quarreling about their pedigrees as they were riding in the tumbrel to the guillotine.

Part II  
THE BIBLE





## HOW THE NEW TESTAMENT CAME TO BE<sup>1</sup>

This brief historical study of the origin of our New Testament has demonstrated twelve significant facts: (1) That the original authors of the different books never suspected that their writings would have the universal value and authority which they now rightfully enjoy. (2) That they at first regarded them as merely an imperfect substitute for verbal teaching and personal testimony. (3) That in each case they had definite individuals and conditions in mind. (4) That the needs of the rapidly growing church and the varied and trying experiences through which it passed were all potent factors in influencing the authors of the New Testament to write. (5) That certain books especially the historical like Luke and Matthew, are composite, consisting of material taken bodily from older documents, like Matthew's *Sayings of Jesus* and the original narrative of Mark. (6) That our New Testament books are only a part of a much larger early Christian literature. (7) That they are unquestionably, however, the most valuable and representative writings of that larger literature. (8) That they were only gradually selected and ascribed a value and authority equal to that of the Old Testament writings. (9) That there were three distinct stages in the formation of the New Testament canon<sup>2</sup>: the gospels were first recognized as authoritative; then Acts, the Apostolic Epistles, and the Apocalypse; and last of all, the complete canon. (10) That the canon was formed

<sup>1</sup> By C. F. Kent. *Origin and Permanent Value of the Old Testament*. p. 83-4. Copyright (1913) by Charles Scribner's Sons. Reprinted by permission of the publishers. These statements of Prof. Kent would probably be accepted by almost all informed students of the Bible, whether liberal or orthodox.

<sup>2</sup> The "canon" is the list of accepted and authoritative writings.

as a result of the need felt by later generations, in connection with their study and worship, for reliable records of the history and teachings of Christianity. (11) That the principles of selection depended ultimately upon the intrinsic character of the books themselves and the authority ascribed to their reputed authors. (12) That the process of selection continued for fully three centuries, and that the results represent the thoughtful, enlightened judgment of thousands of devoted Christians. Thus through definite historical forces and the minds and wills of men, the Eternal Father gradually perfected the record of His supreme revelation to humanity.

## A. IN DEFENSE OF THE OLD VIEW<sup>1</sup>

### HOLY SCRIPTURE AND MODERN NEGATIONS<sup>2</sup>

Is there today in the midst of criticism and unsettlement a tenable doctrine of Holy Scripture for the Christian church and for the world; and if there is, what is that doctrine? That is unquestionably a very pressing question at the present time. "Is there a book which we can regard as the repository of a true revelation of God and an infallible guide in the way of life, and as to our duties to God and man?" is a question of immense importance to us all. Fifty years ago, perhaps less than that, the question hardly needed to be asked among Christian people. It was universally conceded, taken for granted, that there is such a book, the book which we call the Bible. Here, it was believed, is a volume which is an inspired record of the whole will of God for man's salvation; accept as true and inspired the teaching of that book, follow its guidance, and you cannot stumble, you cannot err in attaining the supreme end of existence, in finding salvation, in grasping the prize of a glorious immortality.

Now, a change has come. There is no disguising the fact that we live in an age when, within the church, there is much uneasy and distrustful feeling about the Holy Scriptures—a hesitancy to lean upon them as an authority and to use them as the weapons of precision they once were; with a corresponding anxiety to find some surer basis in external church authority, or with others, in Christ Himself, or again in a Christian consciousness, as it is named—a surer basis for Christian

<sup>1</sup> See also "Mr. Bryan on the Five Points," p. 32-9 of this handbook.

<sup>2</sup> By the late James Orr, D.D., of Glasgow. The Fundamentals. Vol. IX, Chapter IV.

belief and life. We often hear in these days reference to the substitution, in Protestantism, of an "INFALLIBLE BIBLE FOR AN INFALLIBLE CHURCH," and the implication is that the one idea is just as baseless as the other. Sometimes the idea is taken up, quite commonly perhaps, that the thought of an authority external to ourselves—to our own reason or conscience or spiritual nature—must be wholly given up; that only that can be accepted which carries its authority within itself by the appeal it makes to reason or to our spiritual being, and therein lies the judge for us of what is true and what is false.

That proposition has an element of truth in it; it may be true or may be false according as we interpret it. However, as it is frequently interpreted it leaves the Scriptures—but more than that it leaves Jesus Christ Himself—without any authority for us save that with which our own minds see fit to clothe Him. But in regard to the INFALLIBLE BIBLE AND THE INFALLIBLE CHURCH, it is proper to point out that there is a considerable difference between these two things—between the idea of an authoritative Scripture and the idea of an infallible Church or an infallible Pope, in the Roman sense of that word. It may be a clever antithesis to say that Protestantism substituted the idea of an infallible book for the older Romish dogma of an infallible Church; but the antithesis, the contrast, unfortunately has one fatal inaccuracy about it. The idea of the authority of Scripture is not younger, but older than Romanism. It is not a late invention of Protestantism. It is not something that Protestants invented and substituted for the Roman conception of the infallible Church; *but it is the original conception that lies in the Scriptures themselves.* There is a great difference there. It is a belief—this belief in the Holy Scriptures—which was accepted and acted upon by the Church of Christ from the first. The Bible itself claims to be an authoritative book,



and an infallible guide to the true knowledge of God and of the way of salvation. This view is implied in every reference made to it, so far as it then existed, by Christ and His Apostles. That the New Testament, the work of the Apostles and of apostolic men, does not stand on a lower level of inspiration and authority than the Old Testament, is, I think, hardly worth arguing. And in that sense, as a body of writings of divine authority, the books of the Old and the New Testament were accepted by the Apostles and by the church of the post-apostolic age.

Take the writings of any of the early church fathers—I have waded through them wearily as teacher of church history—take Tertullian or Origen, or others, and you will find their words saturated with references to Scripture. You will find the Scriptures treated in precisely the same way as they are used in the Biblical literature of today; namely, as the ultimate authority on the matters of which they speak. I really do the fathers an injustice in this comparison, for I find things said and written about the Holy Scriptures by teachers of the church today which those early fathers would never have permitted themselves to utter. It has now become fashionable among a class of religious teachers to speak disparagingly of or belittle the Holy Scriptures as an authoritative rule of faith for the church. The leading cause of this has undoubtedly been the trend which the criticism of the Holy Scriptures has assumed during the last half century or more.

By all means, let criticism have its rights. Let purely literary questions about the Bible receive full and fair discussion. Let the structure of books be impartially examined. If a reverent science has light to throw on the composition or authority or age of these books, let its voice be heard. If this thing is of God we cannot overthrow it; if it be of man, or so far as it is of man, or so far as it comes in conflict with the reality of things

in the Bible, it will come to naught—as in my opinion a great deal of it is fast coming today through its own excesses. No fright, therefore, need be taken at the mere word, “criticism.”

On the other hand, we are not bound to accept every wild critical theory that any critic may choose to put forward and assert, as the final word on this matter. We are entitled, nay, we are bound, to look at the presuppositions on which each criticism proceeds, and to ask, how far is the criticism controlled by those presuppositions? We are bound to look at the evidence by which the theory is supported, and to ask, is it really borne out by that evidence? And when theories are put forward with every confidence as fixed results, and we find them, as we observe them, still in constant process of evolution and change, constantly becoming more complicated, more extreme, more fanciful, we are entitled to inquire, is this the certainty that it was alleged to be? *Now that is my complaint against much of the current criticism of the Bible*—not that it is criticism, but that it starts from the wrong basis, that it proceeds by arbitrary methods, and that it arrives at results which I think are demonstrably false results. That is a great deal to say, no doubt, but perhaps I shall have some justification to offer for it before I am done.

I am not going to enter into any general tirade against criticism; but it is useless to deny that a great deal of what is called criticism is responsible for the uncertainty and unsettlement of feeling existing at the present time about the Holy Scriptures. I do not speak especially of those whose philosophical standpoint compels them to take up an attitude of negation to supernatural revelation, or to books which profess to convey such a revelation. Criticism of this kind, criticism that starts from the basis of the denial of the supernatural, has, of course, to be reckoned with. In its hands everything is engineered from that basis. There is the denial to begin with, that

God ever has entered into human history, in word and deed, in any supernatural way. The necessary result is that whatever in the Bible affirms or flows from such interposition of God, is expounded or explained away. *The Scriptures on this showing, instead of being the living oracles of God, become simply the fragmentary remains of an ancient Hebrew literature, the chief value of which would seem to be the employment it affords to the critic to dissect it into its various parts, to overthrow the tradition of the past in regard to it, and to frame ever new, ever changing, ever more wonderful theories of the origin of the books and the so-called legends they contain.* Leaving, however, such futile, rationalistic criticism out of account—because that is not the kind of criticism with which we as Christian people have chiefly to deal in our own circle—there is certainly an immense change of attitude on the part of many who still sincerely hold faith in the supernatural revelation of God. I find it difficult to describe this tendency, for I am desirous not to describe it in any way which would do injustice to any Christian thinker, and it is attended by so many signs of an ambiguous character. Jesus is recognized by the majority of those who represent it as “the Incarnate Son of God,” though with shadings off into more or less indefinite assertions even on that fundamental article, which make it sometimes doubtful where the writers exactly stand. The process of thought in regard to Scripture is easily traced. First, there is an ostentatious throwing overboard, joined with some expression of contempt, of what is called the verbal inspiration of Scripture—a very much abused term. Jesus is still spoken of as the highest revealer, and it is allowed that His words, if only we could get at them—and on the whole it is thought we can—furnish the highest rule of guidance for time and for eternity. But even criticism, we are told, must have its rights. Even in the New Testament the Gospels go into the crucible, and in the

name of synoptical criticism, historical criticism, they are subject to wonderful processes, in the course of which much of the history gets melted out or is peeled off as Christian characteristics. Jesus, we are reminded, was still a man of His generation, liable to error in His human knowledge, and allowance must be made for the limitations in His conceptions and judgments. Paul is alleged to be still largely dominated by his inheritance of Rabbinical and Pharisaic ideas. He had been brought up a Pharisee, brought up with the rabbis, and when he became a Christian, he carried a great deal of that into his Christian thought, and we have to strip off that thought when we come to the study of his Epistles. He is therefore a teacher not to be followed further than our own judgment of Christian truth leads us. That gets rid of a great deal that is inconvenient about Paul's teaching.

#### THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE CRITICS

If these things are done in the "green tree" of the New Testament, it is easy to see what will be done in the "dry tree" of the Old. The conclusions of the more advanced school of critics are here generally accepted as once for all settled, with the result—in my judgment, at any rate—that the Old Testament is immeasurably lowered from the place it once held in our reverence. Its earlier history, down to about the age of the kings, is largely resolved into myths and legends and fictions. It is ruled out of the category of history proper. No doubt we are told that the legends are just as good as the history, and perhaps a little better, and that the ideas which they convey to us are just as good, coming in the form of legends, as if they came in the form of fact.

But behold, its laws, when we come to deal with them in this manner, lack divine authority. They are the products of human minds at various ages. Its prophecies are the utterances of men who possessed indeed the

Spirit of God, which is only in fuller degree what other good men, religious teachers in all countries, have possessed—not a spirit qualifying, for example, to give real predictions, or to bear authoritative messages of the truth to men. And so, in this whirl and confusion of theories—you will find them in our magazines, you will find them in our encyclopædias, you will find them in our reviews, you will find them in many books which have appeared to annihilate the conservative believers—in this whirl and confusion of theories, is it any wonder that many should be disquieted and unsettled, and feel as if the ground on which they have been wont to rest was giving way beneath their feet? And so the question comes back with fresh urgency. What is to be said of the place and value of Holy Scripture?

#### IS THERE A TENABLE DOCTRINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF TODAY

One of the urgent needs of our time, and a prime need of the Church, is just a replacement of Holy Scripture, with due regard, I grant, to any really ascertained facts in regard to its literary history, in the faith and lives of men, as the truly inspired and divinely sealed record of God's revealed will for men in great things of the soul. But then, is such a position tenable? In the fierce light of criticism that beats upon the documents and upon the revelation of God's grace they profess to contain, can this position be maintained? I venture to think, indeed, I am very sure, it can. Let me try to indicate—for I can do hardly any more—the lines along which I would answer the question, Have we or can we have a tenable doctrine of Holy Scripture?

For a satisfactory doctrine of Holy Scripture—and by that I mean a doctrine which is satisfactory for the needs of the Christian church, a doctrine which answers to the claim the Scripture makes for itself, to the place it holds in Christian life and Christian experience,



to the needs of the Christian church for edification and evangelization, and in other ways—I say, for a satisfactory doctrine of Holy Scripture it seems to me that three things are indispensably necessary. There is necessary, *first*, a more positive view of the structure of the Bible than at present obtains in many circles. There is necessary, *second*, the acknowledgment of a true supernatural revelation of God in the history and religion of the Bible. There is necessary, *third*, the recognition of a true supernatural inspiration in the record of that revelation. These three things, to my mind, go together—a more positive view of the structure of the Bible; the recognition of the supernatural revelation embodied in the Bible; and a recognition in accordance with the Bible's own claim of a supernatural inspiration in the record of the Bible. Can we affirm these three things? Will they bear the test? I think they will.

### THE STRUCTURE OF THE BIBLE

First as to the structure of the Bible, there is needed a more positive idea of that structure than is at present prevalent. You take much of the criticism and you find the Bible being disintegrated in many ways, and everything like structure falling away from it. You are told, for example, that these books—say the Books of Moses—are made up of many documents, which are very late in origin and cannot claim historical value. You are told that the laws they contain are also, for the most part, of tolerably late origin, and the Levitical laws especially are of post-exilian construction; they were not given by Moses; they were unknown when the children of Israel were carried into captivity. Their temple usage perhaps is embodied in the Levitical law, but most of the contents of that Levitical law were wholly unknown. They were the construction—the invention, to use a term lately employed—of priests and scribes in the post-exilian period. They were put into shape, brought before

the Jewish community returned from Babylon, and accepted by it as the law of life. Thus you have the history of the Bible turned pretty much upside down, and things take on a new aspect altogether.

Must I then, in deference to criticism, accept these theories, and give up the structure which the Bible presents? Taking the Bible as it stands, I find—and you will find if you look there also, without any particular critical learning you will find it—what seems to be evidence of a very definite internal structure, part fitting into part and leading on to part, making up a unity of the whole in that Bible. The Bible has undeniably a structure as it stands. It is distinguished from all other books of the kind, from all sacred books in the world, from Koran and Buddhist scriptures and Indian scriptures and every other kind of religious books. It is distinguished just by this fact, that it is the embodiment of a great plan or scheme or purpose of divine grace extending from the beginning of time through successive ages and dispensations down to its culmination in Jesus Christ and the Pentecostal outpourings of the Spirit. The *history* of the Bible is the history of that development of God's redemptive purpose. The *promises* of the Bible mark the stages of its progress and its hope. The *covenants* of the Bible stand before us in the order of its unfolding. You begin with Genesis. Genesis lays the foundation and leads up to the Book of Exodus; and the Book of Exodus, with its introduction of the law giving, leads up to what follows. Deuteronomy looks back upon the history of the rebellions and the laws given to the people, and leads up to the conquest. I need not follow the later developments, coming away down through the monarchy and the prophecy and the rest, but you find it all gathered up and fulfilled in the New Testament. The Bible, as we have it, closes in Gospel and Epistle and Apocalypse, fulfilling all the ideas of the Old Testament. There the circle completes itself

with the new heaven and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Here is a structure; here is the fact; here is a structure, a connected story, a unity of purpose extending through this book and binding all its parts together. Is that structure an illusion? Do we only, and many with us, dream that it is there? Do our eyes deceive us when we think we see it? Or has somebody of a later date invented it, and put it all, inwrought it all, in these earlier records, legends and stories or whatever you like to call it—skilfully woven into the story until it presents there the appearance of naturalness and truth? I would like to find the mind capable of putting it in and working it into a history once they got the idea itself. But if not invented it belongs to the reality and the substance of the history; it belongs to the facts; and therefore to the book that records the facts. And there are internal attestations in that structure of the Bible to the genuineness of its contents that protest against the efforts that are so often made to reduce it to fragments and shiver up that unity and turn it upside down. "Walk about Zion . . . tell the towers thereof; mark ye well her bulwarks;" you will find there's something there which the art of man will not avail to overthrow.

"Now, that is all very well," I hear some one say, "but there are facts on the other side; there are those manifold proofs which our critical friends adduce that the Bible is really a collection of fragments and documents of much later date, and that the history is really quite a different thing from what the Bible represents it to be." Well, are we to sit down and accept their dictum on that subject without evidence? When I turn to the evidences I do not find them to have that convincing power which our critical friends assign to them.

I am not rejecting this kind of critical theory because it goes against my prejudices or traditions; I reject it simply because it seems to me the evidence does not sustain it, and that the stronger evidence is

against it. I cannot go into details; but take just the one point that I have mentioned—this post-exilian origin of the Levitical law. I have stated what is said about that matter—that those laws and institutions that you find in the middle of the Books of the Pentateuch—those laws and institutions about priests and Levites and sacrifices and all that—had really no existence, had no authoritative form, and to a large extent had no existence of any kind until after the Jews returned from Babylon, and then they were given out as a code of laws which the Jews accepted. That is the theory which is stated once and again. But let the reader put himself in the position of that returned community, and see what the thing means. These exiles had returned from Babylon. They had been organized into a new community. They had rebuilt their temple, and then long years after that when things had got into confusion, those two great men, Ezra and Nehemiah, came among them, and by and by Ezra produced and publicly proclaimed this law of Moses—what he called the law of Moses, the law of God by the hand of Moses—which he had brought from Babylon. A full description of what happened is given in the eighth chapter of the Book of Nehemiah. Ezra reads that law from his pulpit of wood day after day to the people, and the interpreter gives the sense. Now, mind you, most of the things in this law, in this book that he is reading to the people, had never been heard of before—never had existed, in fact; priests and Levites such as are there described had never existed. The law itself was long and complicated and burdensome, but the marvelous thing is that the people meekly accept it all as true—meekly accept it as law, at any rate—and submit to it, and take upon themselves its burdens without a murmur of dissent.

That is a very remarkable thing to start with. But remember, further, what that community was. It was not a community with oneness of mind, but it was a com-

munity keenly divided in itself. If you read the narrative you will find that there were strong opposing factions in that community; there were parties strongly opposed to Ezra and Nehemiah and their reforms; there were many, as you see in the Book of Malachi, who were religiously faithless in that community. But marvelous to say, they all join in accepting this new and burdensome and hitherto unheard of law as the law of Moses, the law coming down to them from hoary antiquity. There were priests and Levites in that community who knew something about their own origin; they had genealogies and knew something about their own past. According to the new theory, these Levites were quite a new order; and they had never existed at all before the time of the exile, and they had come into existence through the sentence of degradation that the prophet Ezekiel had passed upon them in the 44th chapter of his book. History is quite silent about this degradation. If anyone asks who carried out the degradation, or why was it carried out, or when was it done, and how came the priests to submit to the degradation, there is no answer to be given at all. But it came about somehow, so we are told.

And so these priests and Levites are there, and they stand and listen without astonishment as they learn from Ezra how the Levites had been set apart long centuries before in the wilderness by the hand of God, and had an ample tithe provision made for their support, and cities, and what not, set apart for them to live in. People know a little about their past. These cities never had existed except on paper; but they took it all in. They are told about these cities, which they must have known had never existed as Levitical cities. They not only hear but they accept the heavy tithe burdens without a word of remonstrance, and they make a covenant with God pledging themselves to faithful obedience to all those commands. Those tithe laws, as we discover, had no



actual relation to their situation at all. They were drawn up for a totally different case. They were drawn up for a state of things in which there were few priests and many Levites. The priests were only to get the tithe of a tenth, but in this restored community there were a great many priests and few Levites. The tithe laws did not apply at all, but they accepted these as laws of Moses.

And so I might go over the provisions of the law one by one—tabernacle and priests and ritual and sacrifices and Day of Atonement—these things, in their post-exilian form, had never existed; they were spun out of the inventive brains of scribes; and yet the people accepted them all as the genuine handiwork of the ancient law-giver. Was ever such a thing heard of before? Try it in any city. Try to get the people to take upon themselves a series of heavy burdens of taxation or tithes or whatever you like, on the ground that it has been handed down from the middle ages to the present time. Try to get them to believe it; try to get them to obey it, and you will find the difficulty. Is it credible to anyone who leaves books and theories in the study and takes a broad view of human nature with open eyes? I aver that for me, at any rate, it is not; and it will be a marvel to me as long as I am spared to live, how such a theory has ever gained the acceptance it has done among unquestionably able and sound-minded men. I am convinced that the structure of the Bible vindicates itself, and that these counter theories break down.

### A SUPERNATURAL REVELATION

I think it is an essential element in a tenable doctrine of Scripture, in fact the core of the matter, that it contains a record of a true supernatural revelation; and that is what the Bible claims to be—not a development of a man's thoughts about God, and not what this man and that one came to think about God, how they came to have the ideas of a Jehovah or Yahveh, who was originally the

storm-god of Sinai, and how they manufactured out of this the great universal God of the prophets—but a supernatural revelation of what God revealed Himself in word and deed to men in history. And if that claim to a supernatural revelation from God falls, the Bible falls, because it is bound up with it from beginning to end. Now, it is just here that a great deal of our modern thought parts company with the Bible. I am quite well aware that many of our friends who accept these newer critical theories, claim to be just as firm believers in divine revelation as I am myself, and in Jesus Christ and all that concerns Him. I rejoice in the fact, and I believe that they are warranted in saying that there is that in the religion of Israel which you cannot expunge, or explain on any other hypothesis but divine revelation.

But what I maintain is that this theory of the religion of the Bible which has been evolved, which has peculiarly come to be known as the critical view, had a very different origin—in men who did not believe in the supernatural revelation of God in the Bible. This school as a whole, as a wide-spread school, holds the fundamental position—the position which its adherents call that of the modern mind—that miracles did not happen and cannot happen. It takes the ground that they are impossible; therefore its followers have to rule everything of that kind out of the Bible record.

I have never been able to see how that position is tenable to a believer in a living personal God who really loves His creatures and has a sincere desire to bless them. Who dare to venture to assert that the power and will of such a Being as we must believe God to be—the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—is exhausted in the natural creation? That there are no higher things to be attained in God's providence than can be attained through the medium of natural law? That there is in such a Being no capability of revealing Himself in words and deeds beyond nature? If there is a dogmatism in the

world, it is that of the man who claims to limit the Author of the universe by this finite bound. We are told sometimes that it is a far higher thing to see God in the natural than to see Him in something that transcends the natural; a far higher thing to see God in the orderly regular working of nature than to suppose that there has ever been anything transcending that ordinary natural working. I think we all do see God, and try to see Him more and more, in the ordinary and regular working of nature. I hope all try every day to see God there. But the question is, Has this natural working not its limits? Is there not something that nature and natural workings cannot reach, cannot do for men, that we need to have done for us? And are we so to bind God that He cannot enter into communion with man in a supernatural economy of grace, an economy of revelation, an economy of salvation? Are we to deny that He has done so? That is really the dividing line both in Old Testament and New between the different theories. *Revelation*, surely, all must admit if man is to attain the clear knowledge of God that is needed; and the question is one of fact, Has God so revealed Himself? And I believe that it is an essential part of the answer, the true doctrine of Scripture, to say, "Yes, God has so revealed Himself, and the Bible is the record of that revelation, and that revelation shines in its light from the beginning to the end of it." And unless there is a wholehearted acceptance of the fact that God has entered, in word and deed, into human history for man's salvation, for man's renovation, for the deliverance of the world, a revelation culminating in the great Revealer Himself—unless we accept that, we do not get the foundation for the true doctrine of Holy Scripture.

### THE INSPIRED BOOK

Now, just a word in closing, on Inspiration. I do not think that anyone will weigh the evidence of the Bible itself very carefully without saying that at least it claims

to be in a peculiar and especial manner an *inspired book*. There is hardly anyone, I think, who will doubt that Jesus Christ treats the Old Testament in that way. Christ treats it as an imperfect stage of revelation, no doubt. Christ, as the Son of Man, takes up a lordly, discretionary attitude toward that revelation, and He supersedes very much what is in it by something higher, but Christ recognizes that there was true divine revelation there, that He was the goal of it all; He came to fulfil the law and the prophets. The Scriptures are the last word with Him—“*Have ye not read?*” “*Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures.*” And it is just as certain that the Apostles treated the Old Testament in that way, and that they claimed in a peculiar sense the Spirit of God themselves. They claimed that in them and in their word was laid “the foundation on which the church was built,” Jesus Christ Himself, as the substance of their testimony, being the chief corner-stone; “built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets.” And if you say, “Well, are these New Testament Apostles and Prophets?” That is in Ephesians, 2nd chapter. You go to the fifth verse of the third chapter and you find this mystery of Christ which God had revealed to His holy Apostles and Prophets by His Spirit; and it is on that the church was built. And when you come to Timothy (2 Tim. 3:14-17) to that classical passage, you find the marks there by which inspired Scripture is distinguished.

Take the book of Scripture and ask just this question: Does it answer to the claim of this inspired volume? How are we to test this? I do not enter here into the question that has divided good men as to theories of inspiration—questions about inerrancy in detail, and other matters. I want to get away from these things at the circumference to the center. But take the broader test.

#### THE BIBLE’S OWN TEST OF INSPIRATION

What does the Bible itself give us as the test of its inspiration? What does the Bible itself name as the quali-

ties that inspiration imparts to it? Paul speaks in Timothy of the *Sacred Writings that were able to make wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*. He goes on to tell us that *ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction, righteousness, in order that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*. When you go back to the Old Testament and its praise of the Word of God you will find the qualities of inspiration are just the same. "The law of the Lord is perfect," etc. Those are the qualities which the inspired book is alleged to sustain—qualities which only a true inspiration of God's spirit could give; qualities beyond which we surely do not need anything more.

Does anyone doubt that the Bible possesses these qualities? Look at its structure; look at its completeness; look at it in the clearness and fullness and holiness of its teachings; look at it in its sufficiency to guide every soul that truly seeks light unto the saving knowledge of God. Take the book as a whole, in its whole purpose, its whole spirit, its whole aim and tendency and the whole setting of it, and ask, is there not manifest the power which you can only trace back as it traces back itself, to God's Holy Spirit really in the men who wrote it?

## FALLACIES OF THE HIGHER CRITICISM <sup>1</sup>

The errors of the higher criticism of which I shall write pertain to its very substance. Those of a secondary character the limits of my space forbid me to consider. . . .

### DEFINITION OF "THE HIGHER CRITICISM"

As an introduction to the fundamental fallacies of the higher criticism, let me state what the higher criticism

<sup>1</sup> By Franklin Johnson, D.D., LL.D. *The Fundamentals*, Vol. II, chapter III. The insertions in brackets [ ] are Dr. Johnson's footnotes.



is, and then what the higher critics tell us they have achieved.

The name "the higher criticism" was coined by Eichhorn, who lived from 1752 to 1827. Zenos ["The Elements of the Higher Criticism"], after careful consideration, adopts the definition of the name given by its author: "The discovery and verification of the facts regarding the origin, form and value of literary productions upon the basis of their internal characters." The higher critics are not blind to some other sources of argument. They refer to history where they can gain any polemic advantage by doing so. The background of the entire picture which they bring to us is the assumption that the hypothesis of evolution is true. But after all their chief appeal is to the supposed evidence of the documents themselves.

Other names for the movement have been sought. It has been called the "historic view," on the assumption that it represents the real history of the Hebrew people as it must have unfolded itself by the orderly processes of human evolution. But, as the higher critics contradict the testimony of all the Hebrew historic documents which profess to be early, their theory might better be called the "unhistoric view." The higher criticism has sometimes been called the "documentary hypothesis." But as all schools of criticism and all doctrines of inspiration are equally hospitable to the supposition that the biblical writers may have consulted documents, and may have quoted them, the higher criticism has no special right to this title. We must fall back, therefore, upon the name "the higher criticism" as the very best at our disposal, and upon the definition of it as chiefly an inspection of literary productions in order to ascertain their dates, their authors, and their value, as they themselves, interpreted in the light of the hypothesis of evolution, may yield the evidence.

## "ASSURED RESULTS" OF THE HIGHER CRITICISM

I turn now to ask what the higher critics profess to have found out by this method of study. The "assured results" on which they congratulate themselves are stated variously. In this country and England they commonly assume a form less radical than that given them in Germany, though sufficiently startling and destructive to arouse vigorous protest and a vigorous demand for the evidences, which, as we shall see, have not been produced and cannot be produced. The less startling form of the "assured results" usually announced in England and America may be owing to the brighter light of Christianity in these countries. Yet it should be noticed that there are higher critics in this country and England who go beyond the principal German representatives of the school in their zeal for the dethronement of the Old Testament and the New, in so far as these holy books are presented to the world as the very Word of God, as a special revelation from heaven.

The following statement from Zenos [Page 205] may serve to introduce us to the more moderate form of the "assured results" reached by the higher critics. It is concerning the analysis of the Pentateuch, or rather of the Hexateuch, the Book of Joshua being included in the survey. "The Hexateuch is a composite work whose origin and history may be traced in four distinct stages: (1) A writer designated as J. Jahvist, or Jehovist, or Judean prophetic historian, composed a history of the people of Israel about 800 B.C. (2) A writer designated as E. Elohist, or Ephraemite prophetic historian, wrote a similar work some fifty years later, or about 750 B.C. These two were used separately for a time, but were fused together into JE by a redactor [an editor], at the end of the seventh century. (3) A writer of different character wrote a book constituting the main portion of our present Deuteronomy during the reign of Josiah, or a short time before 621 B.C. This writer is designated as D.

To his work were added an introduction and an appendix, and with these accretions it was united with JE by a second redactor, constituting JED. (4) Contemporaneously with Ezekiel the ritual law began to be reduced to writing. It first appeared in three parallel forms. These were codified by Ezra not very much earlier than 444 B.C., and between that date and 280 B.C. it was joined with JED by a final redactor. Thus no less than nine or ten men were engaged in the production of the Hexateuch in its present form, and each one can be distinguished from the rest by his vocabulary and style and his religious point of view."

Such is the analysis of the Pentateuch as usually stated in this country. But in Germany and Holland its chief representatives carry the division of labor much further. Wellhausen distributes the total task among twenty-two writers, and Kuenen among eighteen. Many others resolve each individual writer into a school of writers, and thus multiply the numbers enormously. There is no agreement among the higher critics concerning this analysis, and, therefore, the cautious learner may well wait till those who represent the theory tell him just what it is they desire him to learn.

While some of the "assured results" are thus in doubt, certain things are matters of general agreement. Moses wrote little or nothing, if he ever existed. A large part of the Hexateuch consists of unhistorical legends. We may grant that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Ishmael and Esau existed, or we may deny this. In either case, what is recorded of them is chiefly myth. These denials of the written records follow as matters of course from the late dating of the books, and the assumption that the writers could set down only the national tradition. They may have worked in part as collectors of written stories to be found here and there; but, if so, these written stories were not ancient, and they were diluted by stories transmitted orally. These fragments, whether written

or oral, must have followed the general law of national traditions, and have presented a mixture of legendary chaff, with here and there a grain of historic truth to be sifted out by careful winnowing.

Thus far of the Hexateuch.

The Psalms are so full of references to the Hexateuch that they must have been written after it, and hence after the captivity, perhaps beginning about 400 B.C. David may possibly have written one or two of them, but probably he wrote none, and the strong conviction of the Hebrew people that he was their greatest hymn-writer was a total mistake.

These revolutionary processes are carried into the New Testament and that also is found to be largely untrustworthy as history, as doctrine, and as ethics, though a very good book, since it gives expression to high ideals, and thus ministers to the spiritual life. It may well have influence, but it can have no divine authority. The Christian reader should consider carefully this invasion of the New Testament by the higher criticism. So long as the movement was confined to the Old Testament many good men looked on with indifference, not reflecting that the Bible, though containing "many parts" by many writers, and though recording a progressive revelation, is, after all, one book. But the limits of the Old Testament have long since been overpassed by the higher critics, and it is demanded of us that we abandon the immemorial teaching of the church concerning the entire volume. The picture of Christ which the New Testament sets before us is in many respects mistaken. The doctrines of primitive Christianity which it states and defends were well enough for the time, but have no value for us today except as they commend themselves to our independent judgment. Its moral precepts are fallible, and we should accept them or reject them freely, in accordance with the greater light of the twentieth century. Even Christ could err concerning ethical questions, and

neither His commandments nor His example need constrain us.

The foregoing may serve as an introductory sketch, all too brief, of the higher criticism, and as a basis of the discussion of its fallacies, now immediately to follow.

#### FIRST FALLACY: THE ANALYSIS OF THE PENTATEUCH

I. The first fallacy that I shall bring forward is its analysis of the Pentateuch.

1. We cannot fail to observe that these various documents and their various authors and editors are only imagined. As Green ["Moses and His Recent Critics," pages 104, 105] has said, "There is no evidence of the existence of these documents and redactors, and no pretense of any, apart from the critical tests which have determined the analysis. All tradition and all historical testimony as to the origin of the Pentateuch are against them. The burden of proof is wholly upon the critics. And this proof should be clear and convincing in proportion to the gravity and the revolutionary character of the consequences which it is proposed to base upon it."

2. Moreover, we know what can be done, or rather what cannot be done, in the analysis of composite literary productions. Some of the plays of Shakespeare are called his "mixed plays," because it is known that he collaborated with another author in their production. The very keenest critics have sought to separate his part in these plays from the rest, but they confess that the result is uncertainty and dissatisfaction. Coleridge professed to distinguish the passages contributed by Shakespeare by a process of feeling, but Macaulay pronounced this claim to be nonsense, and the entire effort, whether made by the analysis of phraseology and style, or by esthetic perceptions, is an admitted failure. And this in spite of the fact that the style of Shakespeare is one of the most peculiar and inimitable. The Anglican Prayer Book is another composite production which the higher



critics have often been invited to analyze and distribute to its various sources. Some of the authors of these sources lived centuries apart. They are now well known from the studies of historians. But the Prayer Book itself does not reveal one of them, though its various vocabularies and styles have been carefully interrogated. Now if the analysis of the Pentateuch can lead to such certainties, why should not the analysis of Shakespeare and the Prayer Book do as much? How can men accomplish in a foreign language what they cannot accomplish in their own? How can they accomplish in a dead language what they cannot accomplish in a living language? How can they distinguish ten or eighteen or twenty-two collaborators in a small literary production when they cannot distinguish two? These questions have been asked many times, but the higher critics have given no answer whatever, preferring the safety of a learned silence;

The oracles are dumb.

3. Much has been made of differences of vocabulary in the Pentateuch, and elaborate lists of words have been assigned to each of the supposed authors. But these distinctions fade away when subjected to careful scrutiny, and Driver admits that "the phraseological criteria . . . are slight." Orr, ["The Problem of the Old Testament," page 230] who quotes this testimony, adds, "They are slight, in fact, to a degree of tenuity that often makes the recital of them appear like trifling."

## SECOND FALLACY: THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION APPLIED TO LITERATURE AND RELIGION

II. A second fundamental fallacy of the higher criticism is its dependence on the theory of evolution as the explanation of the history of literature and of religion. The progress of the higher criticism toward its present state has been rapid and assured since Vatke ["Die Biblische Theologie Wissenschaftlich Dargestellt"]

discovered in the Hegelian philosophy of evolution a means of biblical criticism. The Spencerian philosophy of evolution, aided and reinforced by Darwinism, has added greatly to the confidence of the higher critics. As Vatke, one of the earlier members of the school, made the hypothesis of evolution the guiding presupposition of his critical work, so today does Professor Jordan ["Biblical Criticism and Modern Thought." T. and T. Clark. 1909] the very latest representative of the higher criticism. "The nineteenth century," he declares, "has applied to the history of the documents of the Hebrew people its own magic word, evolution. The thought represented by that popular word has been found to have a real meaning in our investigations regarding the religious life and the theological beliefs of Israel." Thus, were there no hypothesis of evolution, there would be no higher criticism. The "assured results" of the higher criticism have been gained, after all, not by an inductive study of the biblical books to ascertain if they present a great variety of styles and vocabularies and religious points of view. They have been attained by assuming that the hypothesis of evolution is true, and that the religion of Israel must have unfolded itself by a process of natural evolution. They have been attained by an interested cross-examination of the biblical books to constrain them to admit the hypothesis of evolution. The imagination has played a large part in the process, and the so-called evidences upon which the "assured results" rest are largely imaginary.

But the hypothesis of evolution, when applied to the history of literature, is a fallacy, leaving us utterly unable to account for Homer, or Dante, or Shakespeare, the greatest poets of the world, yet all of them writing in the dawn of the great literatures of the world. It is a fallacy when applied to the history of religion, leaving us utterly unable to account for Abraham and Moses and Christ, and requiring us to deny that they could have

been such men as the Bible declares them to have been. The hypothesis is a fallacy when applied to the history of the human race in general. Our race has made progress under the influence of supernatural revelation; but progress under the influence of supernatural revelation is one thing, and evolution is another. Buckle ["History of Civilization in England"] undertook to account for history by a thorough-going application of the hypothesis of evolution to its problems; but no historian today believes that he succeeded in his effort, and his work is universally regarded as a brilliant curiosity. The types of evolution advocated by different higher critics are widely different from one another, varying from the pure naturalism of Wellhausen to the recognition of some feeble rays of supernatural revelation; but the hypothesis of evolution in any form, when applied to human history, blinds us and renders us incapable of beholding the glory of God in its more signal manifestations.

### THIRD FALLACY: THE BIBLE A NATURAL BOOK

III. A third fallacy of the higher critics is the doctrine concerning the Scriptures which they teach. If a consistent hypothesis of evolution is made the basis of our religious thinking, the Bible will be regarded as only a product of human nature working in the field of religious literature. It will be merely a natural book. If there are higher critics who recoil from this application of the hypothesis of evolution and who seek to modify it by recognizing some special evidences of the divine in the Bible, the inspiration of which they speak rises but little higher than the providential guidance of the writers. The church doctrine of the full inspiration of the Bible is almost never held by the higher critics of any class, even of the more believing. Here and there we may discover one and another who try to save some fragments of the church doctrine, but they are few and far

between, and the salvage to which they cling is so small and poor that it is scarcely worth while. Throughout their ranks the storm of opposition to the supernatural in all its forms is so fierce as to leave little place for the faith of the church that the Bible is the very Word of God to man. But the fallacy of this denial is evident to every believer who reads the Bible with an open mind. He knows by an immediate consciousness that it is the product of the Holy Spirit. As the sheep know the voice of the shepherd, so the mature Christian knows that the Bible speaks with a divine voice. On this ground every Christian can test the value of the higher criticism for himself. The Bible manifests itself to the spiritual perception of the Christian as in the fullest sense human, and in the fullest sense divine. This is true of the Old Testament, as well as of the New.

#### FOURTH FALLACY: THE MIRACLES DENIED

IV. Yet another fallacy of the higher critics is found in their teachings concerning the Biblical miracles. If the hypothesis of evolution is applied to the Scriptures consistently, it will lead us to deny all the miracles which they record. But if applied timidly and waveringly, as it is by some of the English and American higher critics, it will lead us to deny a large part of the miracles, and to inject as much of the natural as is any way possible into the rest. We shall strain out as much of the gnat of the supernatural as we can, and swallow as much of the camel of evolution as we can. We shall probably reject all the miracles of the Old Testament, explaining some of them as popular legends, and others as coincidences. In the New Testament we shall pick and choose, and no two of us will agree concerning those to be rejected and those to be accepted. If the higher criticism shall be adopted as the doctrine of the church, believers will be left in a distressing state of doubt and uncertainty con-

cerning the narratives of the four Gospels, and unbelievers will scoff and mock. A theory which leads to such wanderings of thought regarding the supernatural in the Scriptures must be fallacious. God is not a God of confusion.

Among the higher critics who accept some of the miracles there is a notable desire to discredit the virgin birth of our Lord, and their treatment of this event presents a good example of the fallacies of reasoning by means of which they would abolish many of the other miracles. One feature of their argument may suffice as an exhibition of all. It is the search for parallels in the pagan mythologies. There are many instances in the pagan stories of the birth of men from human mothers and divine fathers, and the higher critics would create the impression that the writers who record the birth of Christ were influenced by these fables to emulate them, and thus to secure for Him the honor of a celestial paternity. It turns out, however, that these pagan fables do not in any case present to us a virgin mother; the child is always the product of commerce with a god who assumes a human form for the purpose. The despair of the higher critics in this hunt for events of the same kind is well illustrated by Cheyne, [*"Bible Problems."* page 86] who cites the record of the Babylonian king Sargon, about 3800 B.C. This monarch represents himself as having "been born of a poor mother in secret, and as not knowing his father." There have been millions of such instances, but we do not think of the mothers as virgins. Nor does the Babylonian story affirm that the mother of Sargon was a virgin, or even that his father was a god. It is plain that Sargon did not intend to claim a supernatural origin, for, after saying that he "did not know his father," he adds that "the brother of his father lived in the mountains." It was a case, like multitudes of others, in which children, early orphaned, have not known their fathers, but have known the relations of their



fathers. This statement of Sargon I quote from a translation of it made by Cheyne himself in the "Encyclopedia Biblica." He continues, "There is reason to suspect that something similar was originally said by the Israelites of Moses." To substantiate this he adds, "See Encyclopedia Biblica, 'Moses,' section 3 with note 4." On turning to this reference the reader finds that the article was written by Cheyne himself, and that it contains no evidence whatever.

#### FIFTH FALLACY: THE TESTIMONY OF ARCHAEOLOGY DENIED

V. The limitation of the field of research as far as possible to the biblical books as literary productions has rendered many of the higher critics reluctant to admit the new light derived from archaeology. This is granted by Cheyne ["Bible Problems," page 142]. "I have no wish to deny," he says, "that the so-called 'higher critics' in the past were as a rule suspicious of Assyriology as a young, and, as they thought, too self-assertive science, and that many of those who now recognize its contributions to knowledge are somewhat too mechanical in the use of it, and too skeptical as to the influence of Babylonian culture in relatively early times in Syria, Palestine and even Arabia." This grudging recognition of the testimony of archaeology may be observed in several details.

1. It was said that the Hexateuch must have been formed chiefly by the gathering up of oral traditions, because it is not to be supposed that the early Hebrews possessed the art of writing and of keeping records. But the entire progress of archaeological study refutes this. In particular the discovery of the Tel el-Amarna tablets has shown that writing in cuneiform characters and in the Assyrio-Babylonian language was common to the entire biblical world long before the exodus. The discovery was made by Egyptian peasants in 1887. There are more than three hundred tablets, which came from

various lands, including Babylonia and Palestine. Other finds have added their testimony to the fact that writing and the preservation of records were the peculiar passions of the ancient civilized world. Under the constraint of the overwhelming evidences, Professor Jordan writes as follows: "The question as to the age of writing never played a great part in the discussion." He falls back on the supposition that the nomadic life of the early Hebrews would prevent them from acquiring the art of writing. He treats us to such reasoning as the following: "If the fact that writing is very old is such a powerful argument when taken alone, it might enable you to prove that Alfred the Great wrote Shakespeare's plays."

2. It was easy to treat Abraham as a mythical figure when the early records of Babylonia were but little known. The entire coloring of those chapters of Genesis which refer to Mesopotamia could be regarded as the product of the imagination. This is no longer the case. Thus Clay, ["Light on the Old Testament from Babel." 1907. Clay is Assistant Professor and Assistant Curator of the Babylonian Section, Department of Archaeology, in the University of Pennsylvania] writing of Genesis 14, says: "The theory of the late origin of all the Hebrew Scriptures prompted the critics to declare this narrative to be a pure invention of a later Hebrew writer. . . . The patriarchs were relegated to the region of myth and legend. Abraham was made a fictitious father of the Hebrews. . . . Even the political situation was declared to be inconsistent with fact. . . . Weighing carefully the position taken by the critics in the light of what has been revealed through the decipherment of the cuneiform inscriptions, we find that the very foundations upon which their theories rest, with reference to the points that could be tested, totally disappear. The truth is that wherever any light has been thrown upon the subject through excavations, their hypotheses have invariably been found wanting." But the higher critics are still reluctant to

admit this new light. Thus Kent [Biblical World, December, 1906] says, "The primary value of these stories is didactic and religious, rather than historical."

3. The books of Joshua and Judges have been regarded by the higher critics as unhistorical on the ground that their portraiture of the political, religious, and social condition of Palestine in the thirteenth century B.C. is incredible. This cannot be said any longer, for the recent excavations in Palestine have shown us a land exactly like that of these books. The portraiture is so precise, and is drawn out in so many minute lineaments, that it cannot be the product of oral tradition floating down through a thousand years. In what details the accuracy of the biblical picture of early Palestine is exhibited may be seen perhaps best in the excavations by Macalister ["Bible Side-Lights from the Mound of Gezer"] at Gezer. Here again there are absolutely no discrepancies between the land and the book, for the land lifts up a thousand voices to testify that the book is history and not legend.

4. It was held by the higher critics that the legislation which we call Mosaic could not have been produced by Moses, since his age was too early for such codes. This reasoning was completely negatived by the discovery of the code of Hammurabi, the Amraphel [On this matter see any dictionary of the Bible, art. "Amraphel"] of Genesis 14. This code is very different from that of Moses; it is more systematic; and it is at least seven hundred years earlier than the Mosaic legislation.

In short, from the origin of the higher criticism till this present time the discoveries in the field of archaeology have given it a succession of serious blows. The higher critics were shocked when the passion of the ancient world for writing and the preservation of documents was discovered. They were shocked when primitive Babylonia appeared as the land of Abraham. They were shocked when early Palestine appeared as the land

of Joshua and the Judges. They were shocked when Amraphel came back from the grave as a real historical character, bearing his code of laws. They were shocked when the stele of the Pharaoh of the exodus was read, and it was proved that he knew a people called Israel, that they had no settled place of abode, that they were "without grain" for food, and that in these particulars they were quite as they are represented by the Scriptures to have been when they had fled from Egypt into the wilderness. [The higher critics usually slur over this remarkable inscription, and give us neither an accurate translation nor a natural interpretation of it. I have, therefore, special pleasure in quoting the following from Driver, "Authority and Archaeology," page 61: "Whereas the other places named in the inscription all have the determinative for 'country,' Ysiraal has the determinative for 'men': it follows that the reference is not to the land of Israel, but to Israel as a tribe or people, whether migratory, or on the march." Thus this distinguished higher critic sanctions the view of the record which I have adopted. He represents Maspero and Naville as doing the same.] The embarrassment created by these discoveries is manifest in many of the recent writings of the higher critics, in which, however, they still cling heroically to their analysis and their late dating of the Pentateuch and their confidence in the hypothesis of evolution as the key of all history.

#### SIXTH FALLACY: THE PSALMS WRITTEN AFTER THE EXILE

VI. The Psalms are usually dated by the higher critics after the exile. The great majority of the higher critics are agreed here, and tell us that these varied and touching and magnificent lyrics of religious experience all come to us from a period later than 450 B.C. A few of the critics admit an earlier origin of three or four of them, but they do this waveringly, grudgingly, and against



the general consensus of opinion among their fellows. In the Bible a very large number of the Psalms are ascribed to David, and these, with a few insignificant and doubtful exceptions, are denied to him and brought down, like the rest, to the age of the second temple. This leads me to the following observations:

1. Who wrote the Psalms? Here the higher critics have no answer. Of the period from 400 to 175 B.C. we are in almost total ignorance. Josephus knows almost nothing about it, nor has any other writer told us more. Yet, according to the theory, it was precisely in these centuries of silence, when the Jews had no great writers, that they produced this magnificent outburst of sacred song.

2. This is the more remarkable when we consider the well known men to whom the theory denies the authorship of any of the Psalms. The list includes such names as Moses, David, Samuel, Nathan, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the long list of pre-exilic prophets. We are asked to believe that these men composed no Psalms, and that the entire collection was contributed by men so obscure that they have left no single name by which we can identify them with their work.

3. This will appear still more extraordinary if we consider the times in which, it is said, no Psalms were produced, and contrast them with the times in which all of them were produced. The times in which none were produced were the great times, the times of growth, of mental ferment, of conquest, of imperial expansion, of disaster, and of recovery. The times in which none were produced were the times of the splendid temple of Solomon, with its splendid worship. The times in which none were produced were the heroic times of Elijah and Elisha, when the people of Jehovah struggled for their existence against the abominations of the pagan gods. On the other hand, the times which actually produced them were the times of growing legalism, of obscurity, and of inferior abilities. All this is incredible. We could



believe it only if we first came to believe that the Psalms are works of slight literary and religious value. This is actually done by Wellhausen, who says, [Quoted by Orr. "The Problem of the Old Testament." page 435] "They certainly are to the smallest extent original, and are for the most part imitations which illustrate the saying about much writing." The Psalms are not all of an equally high degree of excellence, and there are a few of them which might give some faint color of justice to this depreciation of the entire collection. But as a whole they are exactly the reverse of this picture. Furthermore, they contain absolutely no legalism, but are as free from it as are the Sermon on the Mount and the Pauline epistles. Yet further, the writers stand out as personalities, and they must have left a deep impression upon their fellows. Finally, they were full of the fire of genius kindled by the Holy Spirit. It is impossible for us to attribute the Psalms to the unknown mediocrities of the period which followed the restoration.

4. Very many of the Psalms plainly appear to be ancient. They sing of early events, and have no trace of allusion to the age which is said to have produced them.

5. The large number of Psalms attributed to David have attracted the special attention of the higher critics. They are denied to him on various grounds. He was a wicked man, and hence incapable of writing these praises to the God of righteousness. He was an iron warrior and statesman, and hence not gifted with the emotions found in these productions. He was so busy with the cares of conquest and administration that he had no leisure for literary work. Finally, his conception of God was utterly different from that which moved the psalmists.

The larger part of this catalog of inabilities is manifestly erroneous. David, with some glaring faults, and with a single enormous crime, for which he was profoundly penitent, was one of the noblest of men. He

was indeed an iron warrior and statesman, but also one of the most emotional of all great historic characters. He was busy, but busy men not seldom find relief in literary occupations, as Washington, during the Revolutionary War, poured forth a continual tide of letters, and as Cæsar, Marcus Aurelius, and Gladstone, while burdened with the cares of empire, composed immortal books. The conception of God with which David began his career was indeed narrow (I. Sam. 26: 19). But did he learn nothing in all his later experiences, and his associations with holy priests and prophets? He was certainly teachable: did God fail to make use of him in further revealing Himself to His people? To deny these Psalms to David on the ground of his limited views of God in his early life, is this not to deny that God made successive revelations of Himself wherever He found suitable channels? If, further, we consider the unquestioned skill of David in the music of his nation and his age (I. Sam. 16: 14-25), this will constitute a presupposition in favor of his interest in sacred song. If, finally, we consider his personal career of danger and deliverance, this will appear as the natural means of awakening in him the spirit of varied religious poetry. His times were much like the Elizabethan period, which ministered unexampled stimulus to the English mind.

From all this we may turn to the singular verdict of Professor Jordan: "If a man says he cannot see why David could not have written Psalms 51 and 139, you are compelled to reply as politely as possible that if he did write them then any man can write anything." So also we may say, "as politely as possible," that if Shakespeare, with his "small Latin and less Greek," did write his incomparable dramas, "then any man can write anything;" that if Dickens, with his mere elementary education, did write his great novels, "then any man can write anything;" and that if Lincoln, who had no early schooling, did write his Gettysburg address, "then any man can write anything."

SEVENTH FALLACY: DEUTERONOMY NOT WRITTEN BY  
MOSES

VII. One of the fixed points of the higher criticism is its theory of the origin of Deuteronomy. In I. Kings 22 we have the history of the finding of the book of the law in the temple, which was being repaired. Now the higher critics present this finding, not as the discovery of an ancient document, but as the finding of an entirely new document, which had been concealed in the temple in order that it might be found, might be accepted as the production of Moses, and might produce an effect by its assumed authorship. It is not supposed for a moment that the writer innocently chose the fictitious dress of Mosaic authorship for merely literary purposes. On the contrary, it is steadfastly maintained that he intended to deceive, and that others were with him in the plot to deceive. This statement of the case leads me to the following reflections:

1. According to the theory, this was an instance of pious fraud. And the fraud must have been prepared deliberately. The manuscript must have been soiled and frayed by special care, for it was at once admitted to be ancient. This supposition of deceit must always repel the Christian believer.

2. Our Lord draws from the Book of Deuteronomy all the three texts with which He foils the tempter, Matt. 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-14. It must always shock the devout student that his Saviour should select His weapons from an armory founded on deceit.

3. This may be called an appeal to ignorant piety, rather than to scholarly criticism. But surely the moral argument should have some weight in scholarly criticism. In the sphere of religion moral impossibilities are as insuperable as physical and mental.

4. If we turn to consideration of a literary kind, it is to be observed that the higher criticism runs counter here to the statement of the book itself that Moses was its author.

5. It runs counter to the narrative of the finding of the book, and turns the finding of an ancient book into the forgery of a new book.

6. It runs counter to the judgment of all the intelligent men of the time who learned of the discovery. They judged the book to have come down from the Mosaic age, and to be from the pen of Moses. We hear of no dissent whatever.

7. It seeks support in a variety of reasons, such as style, historical discrepancies, and legal contradictions, all of which prove of little substance when examined fairly.

#### EIGHTH FALLACY: THE PRIESTLY LEGISLATION NOT ENACTED UNTIL THE EXILE

VIII. Another case of forgery is found in the origin of the priestly legislation, if we are to believe the higher critics. This legislation is contained in a large number of passages scattered through Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. It has to do chiefly with the tabernacle and its worship, with the duties of the priests and Levites, and with the relations of the people to the institutions of religion. It is attributed to Moses in scores of places. It has a strong coloring of the Mosaic age and of the wilderness life. It affirms the existence of the tabernacle, with an orderly administration of the ritual services. But this is all imagined, for the legislation is a late production. Before the exile there were temple services and a priesthood, with certain regulations concerning them, either oral or written, and use was made of this tradition; but as a whole the legislation was enacted by such men as Ezekiel and Ezra during and immediately after the exile, or about 444 B.C. The name of Moses, the fiction of a tabernacle, and the general coloring of the Mosaic age, were given it in order to render it authoritative and to secure the ready obedience of the nation. But now;

1. The moral objection here is insuperable. The supposition of forgery, and of forgery so cunning, so elaborate, and so minute, is abhorrent. If the forgery had been invented and executed by wicked men to promote some scheme of selfishness, it would have been less odious. But when it is presented to us as the expedient of holy men, for the advancement of the religion of the God of righteousness, which afterward blossomed out into Christianity, we must revolt.

2. The theory gives us a portraiture of such men as Ezekiel and Ezra which is utterly alien from all that we know of them. The expedient might be worthy of the prophets of Baal or of Chemosh; it was certainly not worthy of the prophets of Jehovah, and we dishonor them when we attribute it to them and place them upon a low plane of craft and cunning of which the records concerning them are utterly ignorant.

3. The people who returned from the exile were among the most intelligent and enterprising of the nation, else they would not have returned, and they would not have been deceived by the sudden appearance of Mosaic laws forged for the occasion and never before heard of.

4. Many of the regulations of this legislation are drastic. It subjected the priests and Levites to a rule which must have been irksome in the extreme, and it would not have been lightly accepted. We may be certain that if it had been a new thing fraudulently ascribed to Moses, these men would have detected the deceit, and would have refused to be bound by it. But we do not hear of any revolt or even of any criticism.

Such are some of the fundamental fallacies of the higher criticism. They constitute an array of impossibilities. I have stated them in their more moderate forms, that they may be seen and weighed without the remarkable extravagances which some of their advocates



indulge. In the very mildest interpretation which can be given them, they are repugnant to the Christian faith.

### NO MIDDLE GROUND

But might we not accept a part of this system of thought without going to any hurtful extreme? Many today are seeking to do this. They present to us two diverse results.

1. Some, who stand at the beginning of the tide, find themselves in a position of doubt. If they are laymen, they know not what to believe. If they are ministers, they know not what to believe or to teach. In either case, they have no firm footing, and no Gospel, except a few platitudes which do little harm and little good.

2. The majority of those who struggle to stand here find it impossible to do so, and give themselves up to the current. There is intellectual consistency in the lofty church doctrine of inspiration. There may be intellectual consistency in the doctrine that all things have had a natural origin and history, under the general providence of God, as distinguished from His supernatural revelation of Himself through holy men, and especially through His co-equal Son, so that the Bible is as little supernatural as the "Imitation of Christ" or the "Pilgrim's Progress." But there is no position of intellectual consistency between these two, and the great mass of those who try to pause at various points along the descent are swept down with the current. The natural view of the Scriptures is a sea which has been rising higher for three-quarters of a century. Many Christians bid it welcome to pour lightly over the walls which the faith of the church has always set up against it, in the expectation that it will prove a healthful and helpful stream. It is already a cataract, uprooting, destroying, and slaying.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE—  
DEFINITION, EXTENT AND PROOF<sup>1</sup>

In this paper the authenticity and credibility of the Bible are assumed, by which is meant (1), that its books were written by the authors to whom they are ascribed, and that their contents are in all material points as when they came from their hands; and (2), that those contents are worthy of entire acceptance as to their statements of fact. Were there need to prove these assumptions, the evidence is abundant, and abler pens have dealt with it.

Let it not be supposed, however, that because these things are assumed their relative importance is undervalued. On the contrary, they underlie inspiration, and, as President Patton says, come in on the ground floor. They have to do with the historicity of the Bible, which for us just now is the basis of its authority. Nothing can be settled until this is settled, but admitting its settlement which, all things considered, we now may be permitted to do, what can be of deeper interest than the question as to how far that authority extends?

This is the inspiration question, and while so many have taken in hand to discuss the others, may not one be at liberty to discuss this? It is an old question, so old, indeed, as again in the usual recurrence of thought to have become new. Our fathers discussed it, it was the great question once upon a time, it was sifted to the bottom, and a great storehouse of fact, and argument, and illustration has been left for us to draw upon in a day of need.

For a long while the enemy's attack has directed our energies to another part of the field, but victory there will drive us back here again. The other questions are outside of the Bible itself, this is inside. They lead men

<sup>1</sup> By Rev. James M. Gray, D.D., Dean of Moody Bible Institute, Chicago. The Fundamentals. Vol. III, chapter I.

away from the contents of the book to consider how they came, this brings us back to consider what they are. Happy the day when the inquiry returns here, and happy the generation which has not forgotten how to meet it.

## I. DEFINITION OF INSPIRATION

1. *Inspiration is not revelation.* As Dr. Charles Hodge expressed it, revelation is the act of communicating divine knowledge to the mind, but inspiration is the act of the same Spirit controlling those who make that knowledge known to others. In Chalmer's happy phrase, the one is the influx, the other the efflux. Abraham received the influx, he was granted a revelation; but Moses was endued with the efflux, being inspired to record it for our learning. In the one case there was a flowing in and in the other a flowing out. Sometimes both of these experiences met in the same person, indeed Moses himself is an illustration of it, having received a revelation at another time and also the inspiration to make it known, but it is of importance to distinguish between the two.

2. *Inspiration is not illumination.* Every regenerated Christian is illuminated in the simple fact that he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, but every such an one is not also inspired, but only the writers of the Old and New Testaments. Spiritual illumination is subject to degrees, some Christians possessing more of it than others, but, as we understand it, inspiration is not subject to degrees, being in every case the breath of God, expressing itself through a human personality.

3. *Inspiration is not human genius.* The latter is simply a natural qualification, however exalted it may be in some cases, but inspiration in the sense now spoken of is supernatural throughout. It is an enduement coming upon the writers of the Old and New Testaments directing and enabling them to write those books, and

on no other men, and at no other time, and for no other purpose. No human genius of whom we ever heard introduced his writings with the formula, "Thus saith the Lord," or words to that effect, and yet such is the common utterance of the Bible authors. No human genius ever yet agreed with any other human genius as to the things it most concerns men to know, and, therefore, however exalted his equipment, it differs not merely in degree but in kind from the inspiration of the Scriptures.

In its mode the divine agency is inscrutable, though its effects are knowable. We do not undertake to say just how the Holy Spirit operated on the minds of these authors to produce these books any more than we undertake to say how He operates on the human heart to produce conversion, but we accept the one as we do the other on the testimony that appeals to faith.

4. When we speak of the Holy Spirit coming upon the men in order to the composition of the books, it should be further understood that *the object is not the inspiration of the men but the books*—not the writers but the *writings*. It terminates upon the record, in other words, and not upon the human instrument who made it.

To illustrate: Moses, David, Paul, John, were not always and everywhere inspired, for then always and everywhere they would have been infallible and inerrant, which was not the case. They sometimes made mistakes in thought and erred in conduct. But however fallible and errant they may have been as men compassed with infirmity like ourselves, such fallibility or errancy was never under any circumstances communicated to their sacred writings.

Ecclesiastes is a case in point, which on the supposition of its Solomonic authorship, is giving us a history of his search for happiness "under the sun." Some statements in that book are only partially true while others are altogether false, therefore it cannot mean that Solomon was inspired as he tried this or that experiment

to find what no man has been able to find outside of God. But it means that his language is inspired as he records the various feelings and opinions which possessed him in the pursuit.

This disposes of a large class of objections sometimes brought against the doctrine of inspiration—those, for example, associated with the question as to whether the Bible is the Word of God or only contains that Word. If by the former be meant that God spake every word in the Bible, and hence that every word is true, the answer must be *no*; but if it be meant that God caused every word in the Bible, true or false, to be recorded, the answer should be *yes*. There are words of Satan in the Bible, words of false prophets, words of the enemies of Christ, and yet they are God's words, not in the sense that He uttered them, but that He caused them to be recorded, infallibly and inerrantly recorded, for our profit. In this sense the Bible does not merely contain the Word of God, it *is* the Word of God.

Of any merely human author it is the same. This paper is the writer's word throughout, and yet he may quote what other people say to commend them or dispute them. What they say he records, and in doing so he makes the record his in the sense that he is responsible for its accuracy.

5. Let it be stated further in this definitional connection, that *the record for whose inspiration we contend is the original record*—the autographs or parchments of Moses, David, Daniel, Matthew, Paul or Peter, as the case may be, and not any particular translation or translations of them whatever. There is no translation absolutely without error, nor could there be, considering the infirmities of human copyists, unless God were pleased to perform a perpetual miracle to secure it.

But does this make nugatory our contention? Some would say it does, and they would argue speciously that to insist on the inerrancy of a parchment no living being has ever seen is an academic question merely, and with-



out value. But do they not fail to see that the character and perfection of the Godhead are involved in that inerrancy?

Some years ago a "liberal" theologian, deprecating this discussion as not worth while, remarked that it was a matter of small consequence whether a pair of trousers were originally perfect if they were now rent. To which the valiant and witty David James Burrell replied, that it might be a matter of small consequence to the wearer of the trousers, but the tailor who made them would prefer to have it understood that they did not leave his shop that way. And then he added, that if the Most High must train among knights of the shears He might at least be regarded as the best of the guild, and One who drops no stitches and sends out no imperfect work.

Is it not with the written Word as with the incarnate Word? Is Jesus Christ to be regarded as imperfect because His character has never been perfectly reproduced before us? Can He be the incarnate Word unless He were absolutely without sin? And by the same token, can the Scriptures be the written Word unless they were inerrant?

But if this question be so purely speculative and valueless, what becomes of the science of Biblical criticism by which properly we set such store today? Do builders drive piles into the soft earth if they never expect to touch bottom? Do scholars dispute about the Scripture text and minutely examine the history and meaning of single words, "the delicate coloring of mood, tense and accent," if at the end there is no approximation to an absolute? As Dr. George H. Bishop says, does not our concordance, every time we take it up, speak loudly to us of a once inerrant parchment? Why do we not possess concordances for the very words of other books?

Nor is that original parchment so remote a thing as some suppose. Do not the number and variety of manuscripts and versions extant render it comparatively easy to arrive at a knowledge of its text, and does not com-

petent scholarship today affirm that as to the New Testament at least, we have in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of every thousand the very word of that original text? Let candid consideration be given to these things and it will be seen that we are not pursuing a phantom in contending for an inspired autograph of the Bible.

## II. EXTENT OF INSPIRATION

1. *The inspiration of scripture includes the whole and every part of it.* There are some who deny this and limit it to only the prophetic portions, the words of Jesus Christ, and, say, the profounder spiritual teachings of the epistles. The historical books in their judgment, and as an example, do not require inspiration because their data were obtainable from natural sources.

The Bible itself, however, knows of no limitations, as we shall see: "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.*" The historical data, most of it at least, might have been obtained from natural sources, but what about the supernatural guidance required in their selection and narration? Compare, for answer, the records of creation, the fall, the deluge, etc., found in Genesis with those recently discovered by excavations in Bible lands. Do not the results of the pick-axe and the spade point to the same original as the Bible, and yet do not their childishness and grotesqueness often bear evidence of the human and sinful mould through which they ran? Do they not show the need of some power other than man himself to lead him out of the labyrinth of error into the open ground of truth?

Furthermore, are not the historical books in some respects the most important in the Bible? Are they not the bases of its doctrine? Does not the doctrine of sin need for its starting point the record of the fall? Could we so satisfactorily understand justification did we not have the story of God's dealings with Abraham? And what of the priesthood of Christ? Dismiss Leviticus

and what can be made of Hebrews? Is not the Acts of the Apostles historical, but can we afford to lose its inspiration?

And then, too, the historical books are, in many cases, prophetic as well as historical. Do not the types and symbols in them show forth the Saviour in all the varying aspects of His Grace? Has not the story of Israel the closest relation as type and anti-type to our spiritual redemption? Does not Paul teach this in 1 Cor. 10:6-11? And if these things were thus written for our learning, does not this imply their inspiration?

Indeed, the historical books have the strongest testimony borne to their importance in other parts of the Bible. This will appear more particularly as we proceed, but take, in passing, Christ's use of Deuteronomy in His conflict with the tempter. Thrice does He overcome him by a citation from that historical book without note or comment. Is it not difficult to believe that neither He nor Satan considered it inspired?

Thus without going further, we may say, with Dr. DeWitt of Princeton, that it is impossible to secure the *religious* infallibility of the Bible—which is all the objector regards as necessary—if we exclude Bible history from the sphere of its inspiration. But if we include Bible history at all, we must include the whole of it, for who is competent to separate its parts?

2. *The inspiration includes not only all the books of the Bible in general but in detail, the form as well as the substance, the word as well as the thought.* This is sometimes called the *verbal* theory of inspiration and is vehemently spoken against in some quarters. It is too mechanical, it degrades the writers to the level of machines, it has a tendency to make skeptics, and all that.

This last remark, however, is not so alarming as it sounds. The doctrine of the eternal retribution of the wicked is said to make skeptics, and also that of a vicarious atonement, not to mention other revelations of Holy Writ. The natural mind takes to none of these things.

But if we are not prepared to yield the point in one case for such a reason, why should we be asked to do it in another?

And as to degrading the writers to the level of machines, even if it were true, as it is not, why should fault be found when one considers the result? Which is the more important, the free agency of a score or two of mortals, or the divinity of their message? The whole argument is just a spark from the anvil on which the race is ever trying to hammer out the deification of itself.

But we are insisting upon no theory—not even the verbal theory—if it altogether excludes the human element in the transmission of the sacred word. As Dr. Henry B. Smith says, “God speaks through the personality as well as the lips of His messengers,” and we may pour into the word “personality” everything that goes to make it—the age in which the person lived, his environment, his degree of culture, his temperament and all the rest. As Wayland Hoyt expressed it, “Inspiration is not a mechanical, crass, bald compulsion of the sacred writers, but rather a dynamic, divine influence over their freely-acting faculties” in order that the latter in relation to the subject-matter then in hand may be kept inerrant, *i.e.*, without mistake or fault. It is limiting the Holy One of Israel to say that He is unable to do this without turning a human being into an automaton. Has He Who created man as a free agent left Himself no opportunity to mould his thoughts into forms of speech inerrantly expressive of His will, without destroying that which He has made?

And, indeed, wherein resides man’s free agency, in his mind or in his mouth? Shall we say he is free while God controls his thought, but that he becomes a mere machine when that control extends to the *expression* of his thought?

But returning to the argument, if the divine influence upon the writers did not extend to the form as well as

the substance of their writings; if, in other words, God gave them only the thought, permitting them to express it in their own words, what guarantee have we that they have done so?

An illustration the writer has frequently used will help to make this clear. A stenographer in a mercantile house was asked by his employer to write as follows:

Gentlemen: We misunderstood your letter and will now fill **your** order.

Imagine the employer's surprise, however, when a little later this was set before him for his signature:

Gentlemen: We misunderstood your letter and will *not* fill **your** order.

The mistake was only of a single letter, but it was entirely subversive of his meaning. And yet the thought was given clearly to the stenographer, and the words, too, for that matter. Moreover, the latter was capable and faithful, but he was human, and it is human to err. Had not his employer controlled his expression down to the very letter, the thought intended to be conveyed would have failed of utterance.

In the same way the human authors of the Bible were men of like passions with ourselves. Their motives were pure, their intentions good, but even if their subject-matter were the commonplaces of men, to say nothing of the mysterious and transcendent revelation of a holy God, how could it be an absolute transcript of the mind from which it came in the absence of miraculous control?

In the last analysis, it is the Bible itself, of course, which must settle the question of its inspiration and the extent of it, and to this we come in the consideration of the proof, but we may be allowed a final question. Can even God Himself give a thought to man without the words that clothe it? Are not the two inseparable, as much so "as a sum and its figures, or a tune and its notes?" Has any case been known in human history



where a healthy mind has been able to create ideas without expressing them to its own preception? In other words, as Dr. A. J. Gordon once observed: "To deny that the Holy Spirit speaks in Scripture is an intelligible proposition, but to admit that He speaks, it is impossible to know what He says except as we have His Words."

### III. PROOF OF INSPIRATION

1. *The inspiration of the Bible is proven by the philosophy, or what may be called the nature of the case.*

The proposition may be stated thus: The Bible is the history of the redemption of the race, or from the side of the individual, a supernatural revelation of the will of God to men for their salvation. But it was given to certain men of one age to be conveyed in writing to other men in different ages. Now all men experience difficulty in giving faithful reflections of their thoughts to others because of sin, ignorance, defective memory and the inaccuracy always incident to the use of language.

Therefore it may be easily deduced that if the revelation is to be communicated precisely as originally received, the same supernatural power is required in the one case as in the other. This has been sufficiently elaborated in the foregoing and need not be dwelt upon again.

2. *It may be proven by the history and character of the Bible, i.e., by all that has been assumed as to its authenticity and credibility. All that goes to prove these things goes to prove its inspiration.*

To borrow in part, the language of the Westminster Confession, "the heavenliness of its matter, the efficacy of its doctrine, the unity of its various parts, the majesty of its style and the scope and completeness of its design" all indicate the divinity of its origin.

The more we think upon it the more we must be convinced that men unaided by the Spirit of God could neither have conceived, nor put together, nor preserved

in its integrity that precious deposit known as the Sacred Oracles.

3. *But the strongest proof is the declarations of the Bible itself* and the inferences to be drawn from them. Nor is this reasoning in a circle as some might think. In the case of a man as to whose veracity there is no doubt, no hesitancy is felt in accepting what he says about himself; and since the Bible is demonstrated to be true in its statements of fact by unassailable evidence, may we not accept its witness in its own behalf?

Take the argument from Jesus Christ as an illustration. He was content to be tested by the prophecies that went before on Him, and the result of that ordeal was the establishment of His claims to be the Messiah beyond a peradventure. That complex system of prophecies, rendering collusion or counterfeit impossible, is the incontestable proof that He was what He claimed to be. But, of course, He in whose birth, and life, and death, and resurrection such marvelous prophecies met their fulfilment, became, from the hour in which His claims were established, a witness to the divine authority and infallible truth of the sacred records in which these prophecies are found.—(*The New Apologetic*, by Professor Robert Watts, D.D.)

It is so with the Bible. The character of its contents, the unity of its parts, the fulfilment of its prophecies, the miracles wrought in its attestation, the effects it has accomplished in the lives of nations and of men, all these go to show that it is divine, and if so, that it may be believed in what it says about itself.

#### A. ARGUMENT FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT

To begin with the Old Testament, (a) consider how the writers speak of the origin of their messages. Dr. James H. Brookes is authority for saying that the phrase, "Thus saith the Lord" or its equivalent is used by them two thousand times. Suppose we eliminate this phrase and its necessary context from the Old Testament in

every instance, one wonders how much of the Old Testament would remain.

(b) Consider how the utterances of the Old Testament writers are introduced into the New. Take Matthew 1:22 as an illustration, "Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet." It was not the prophet who spake, but the Lord who spake through the prophet.

(c) Consider how Christ and His apostles regard the Old Testament. He came "not to destroy but to fulfil the law and the prophets." Matt. 5:17. "The Scripture cannot be broken." John 10:35. He sometimes used single words as the bases of important doctrines, twice in Matthew 22, at verses 31, 32 and 42-5. The apostles do the same. See Galatians 3:16, Hebrews 2:8, 11 and 12:26, 27.

(d) Consider what the apostles directly teach upon the subject. Peter tells us that "No prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21, R. V.). "Prophecy" here applies to the word written as is indicated in the preceding verse, and means not merely the foretelling of events, but the utterances of any word of God without reference as to time past, present or to come. As a matter of fact, what Peter declares is that the will of man had nothing to do with any part of the Old Testament, but that the whole of it, from Genesis to Malachi, was inspired by God.

Of course Paul says the same, in language even plainer, in 2 Timothy. 3:16, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable." The phrase "inspiration of God" means literally *God-breathed*. The whole of the Old Testament is God-breathed, for it is to that part of the Bible the language particularly refers since the New Testament as such was not then generally known.

As this verse is given somewhat differently in the Revised Version we dwell upon it a moment longer. It

there reads, "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable," and the caviller is disposed to say that, therefore, some Scripture may be inspired and some may not be, and that the profitableness extends only to the former and not the latter.

But aside from the fact that Paul would hardly be guilty of such a weak truism as that, it may be stated in reply first, that the King James rendering of the passage is not only the more consistent Scripture, but the more consistent Greek. Several of the best Greek scholars of the period affirm this, including some of the revisers themselves who did not vote for the change. And secondly, even the revisers place it in the margin as of practically equal authority with their preferred translation, and to be chosen by the reader if desired. There are not a few devout Christians, however, who would be willing to retain the rendering of the Revised Version as being stronger than the King James, and who would interpolate a word in applying it to make it mean, "Every Scripture (*because*) inspired of God is also profitable." We believe that both Gaussen and Wordsworth take this view, two as staunch defenders of plenary inspiration as could be named.

#### B. ARGUMENT FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT

We are sometimes reminded that, however strong and convincing the argument for the inspiration of the Old Testament, that for the New Testament is only indirect. "Not one of the evangelists tells us that he is inspired," says a certain theological professor, "and not one writer of an epistle, except Paul."

We shall be prepared to dispute this statement a little further, but in the meantime let us reflect that the inspiration of the Old Testament being assured as it is, why should similar evidence be required for the New? Whoever is competent to speak as a Bible authority knows that the *unity* of the Old and New Testaments is the strongest demonstration of their common source. They

are seen to be not two books, but only two parts of one book.

To take then the analogy of the Old Testament. The foregoing argument proves its inspiration as a whole, although there were long periods separating the different writers, Moses and David let us say, or David and Daniel, the Pentateuch and the Psalms, or the Psalms and the Prophets. As long, or longer, than between Malachi and Matthew, or Ezra and the Gospels. If then to carry conviction for the plenary inspiration of the Old Testament as a whole, it is not necessary to prove it for every book, why, to carry conviction for the plenary inspiration of the *Bible* as a whole is it necessary to do the same?

We quote here a paragraph or two from Dr. Nathaniel West. He is referring to 2 Timothy 3:16, which he renders, "*Every* Scripture is inspired of God," and adds:

The distributive word "*Every*" is used not only to particularize each individual Scripture of the Canon that Timothy had studied from his youth, but also to include, along with the Old Testament the New Testament Scriptures extant in Paul's day, and any others, such as those that John wrote after him.

The Apostle Peter tells us that he was in possession, not merely of some of Paul's Epistles, but "*all* his Epistles," and places them, canonically, in the same rank with what he calls "*the other Scriptures*," *i.e.*, of equal inspiration and authority with the "*words spoken before by the Holy Prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Savior, through the Apostles.*" 2 Peter 3:2, 16.

Paul teaches the same co-ordination of the Old and New Testaments. Having referred to the Old as a unit, in his phrase "*Holy Scriptures*," which the revisers translate "*Sacred Writings*," he proceeds to particularize. He tells Timothy that "*every Scripture*," whether of Old or New Testament production, "*is inspired of God.*" Let it be in the Pentateuch, the Psalms, the Prophets, the Historical Books, let it be a chapter or a verse; let it be in the Gospels, the Acts, his own or Peter's Epistles, or even John's writings, yet to be, still each part of the Sacred Collection is God-given and because of that possesses divine authority as part of the Book of God.

We read this from Dr. West twenty years ago, and rejected it as his dictum. We read it today, with deeper



and fuller knowledge of the subject, and we believe it to be true.

It is somewhat as follows that Dr. Gaussen in his exhaustive "Theopneustia" gives the argument for the inspiration of the New Testament.

(a) The New Testament is the later, and for that reason the more important revelation of the two, and hence if the former were inspired, it certainly must be true of the latter. The opening verses of the first and second chapters of Hebrews plainly suggest this: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son. . . . *Therefore* we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard."

And this inference is rendered still more conclusive by the circumstance that the New Testament sometimes explains, sometimes proves, and sometimes even repeals ordinances of the Old Testament. See Matthew 1:22, 23, for an illustration of the first, Acts 13:19-39 for the second and Galatians 5:6 for the third. Assuredly these things would not be true if the New Testament were not of equal, and in a certain sense, even greater authority than the Old.

(b) The writers of the New Testament were of an equal or higher rank than those of the Old. That they were prophets is evident from such allusions as Romans 16:25-7, and Ephesians 3:4, 5. But that they were more than prophets is indicated in the fact that wherever in the New Testament prophets and apostles are both mentioned, the last-named is always mentioned first (see 1 Cor. 12:28, Ephesians 2:20, Ephesians 4:11). It is also true that the writers of the New Testament had a higher mission than those of the Old, since they were sent forth by Christ as He had been sent forth by the Father (John 20:21). They were to go, not to a single nation only (as Israel), but into all the world (Matthew 28:19). They received the keys of the kingdom of

heaven (Matthew 16:19). And they are to be pre-eminently rewarded is the regeneration (Matthew 19:28). Such considerations and comparisons as these are not to be overlooked in estimating the authority by which they wrote.

(c) The writers of the New Testament were especially qualified for their work, as we see in Matthew 10:19, 20, Mark 13:11, Luke 12:2, John 14:26 and John 16:13, 14. These passages will be dwelt on more at length in a later division of our subject, but just now it may be noticed that in some of the instances, inspiration of the most absolute character was promised as to what they should *speak*—the inference being warranted that none the less would they be guided in what they wrote. Their spoken words were limited and temporary in their sphere, but their written utterances covered the whole range of revelation and were to last forever. If in the one case they were inspired, how much more in the other?

(d) The writers of the New Testament directly claim divine inspiration. See Acts 15:23-9, where, especially at verse 28, James is recorded as saying, "for it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things." Here it is affirmed very clearly that the Holy Ghost is the real writer of the letter in question and simply using the human instruments for His purpose. Add to this 1 Corinthians 2:13, where Paul says: "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual," or as the margin of the Revised Version puts it, "imparting spiritual things to spiritual men." In 1 Thessalonians 2:13 the same writer says: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God." In 2 Peter 3:2 the apostle places his own words on a level with those

of the prophets of the Old Testament, and in verses 15 and 16 of the same chapter he does the same with the writings of Paul, classifying them "with the other Scriptures." Finally, in Revelation 2:7, although it is the Apostle John who is writing, he is authorized to exclaim: "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," and so on throughout the epistles to the seven churches.

### C. ARGUMENT FOR THE WORDS

The evidence that the inspiration includes the form as well as the substance of the Holy Scriptures, the word as well as the thought, may be gathered in this way.

1. *There were certainly some occasions when the words were given to the human agents.* Take the instance of Balaam (Numbers 22:38, 23:12, 16). It is clear that this self-seeking prophet *thought*, *i.e.*, desired to speak differently from what he did, but was obliged to speak the word that God put in his mouth. There are two incontrovertible witnesses to this, one being Balaam himself and the other God.

Take Saul (1 Samuel 10:10), or at a later time, his messengers (19:20-4). No one will claim that there was not an inspiration of the words here. And Caiaphas also (John 11:49-52), of whom it is expressly said that when he prophesied that one man should die for the people, "this spake he not of himself." Who believes that Caiaphas meant or really knew the significance of what he said?

And how entirely this harmonizes with Christ's promise to His disciples in Mathew 10:19, 20 and elsewhere. "When they deliver you up take no thought (be not anxious) how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Mark is even more emphatic: "Neither do ye *premeditate*, but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye, for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."

Take the circumstance of the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4-11), when the disciples "began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." Parthians, Medes, Elamites, the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, the strangers of Rome, Cretes and Arabians all testified "we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God!" Did not this inspiration include the words? Did it not indeed *exclude* the thought? What clearer example could be desired?

To the same purport consider Paul's teachings in 1 Corinthians 14 about the gift of tongues. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue, in the Spirit speaketh mysteries, but no man understandeth him, therefore, he is to pray that he may interpret. Under some circumstances, if no interpreter be present, he is to keep silence in the church and speak only to himself and to God.

But better still, consider the utterance of 1 Peter 1:10, 11, where he speaks of them who prophesied of the grace that should come, as "searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, to whom it was revealed," etc.

Should we see a student who, having taken down the lecture of a profound philosopher, was now studying diligently to comprehend the sense of the discourse which he had written, we should understand simply that he was a pupil and not a master; that he had nothing to do with originating either the thoughts or the words of the lecture, but was rather a disciple whose province it was to understand what he had transcribed, and so be able to communicate it to others.

And who can deny that this is the exact picture of what we have in this passage from Peter? Here were inspired writers studying the meaning of what they themselves had written. With all possible allowance for the human peculiarities of the writers, they must have been reporters of what they heard, rather than formulators of that which they had been made to understand.—*A. J. Gordon in "The Ministry of the Spirit."* p. 173, 174.

2. *The Bible plainly teaches that inspiration extends to its words.* We spoke of Balaam as uttering that which

God put in his mouth, but the same expression is **used** by God Himself with reference to His prophets. When Moses would excuse himself from service because he was not eloquent, He who made man's mouth said, "Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say" (Exodus 4:10-12). And Dr. James H. Brookes' comment is very pertinent. "God did not say I will be with thy mind, and teach thee what thou shalt think; but I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say. This explains why, forty years afterward, Moses said to Israel, 'Ye shall not add unto the word I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it.' (Deut. 4:2)." Seven times Moses tells us that the tables of stone containing the commandments were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables (Exodus 31:16).

Passing from the Pentateuch to the poetical books we find David saying, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue" (2 Samuel 23:1, 2). He, too, does not say, God thought by me, but spake by me.

Coming to the prophets, Jeremiah confesses that, like Moses, he recoiled from the mission on which he was sent and for the same reason. He was a child and could not speak. "Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold I have put My word in thy mouth" (Jeremiah 1:6-9).

All of which substantiates the declaration of Peter quoted earlier, that "no prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." Surely, if the will of man had *nothing* to do with the prophecy, he could not have been at liberty in the selection of the words.

So much for the Old Testament, but when we reach the New, we have the same unerring and verbal accuracy guaranteed to the apostles by the Son of God, as we have seen. And we have the apostles making claim of it, as when Paul in 1 Corinthians 2:12, 13 distinguishes be-



tween the "things" or the thoughts which God gave him and the words in which he expressed them, and insisting on the divinity of both; "Which things also we speak," he says, "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." In Galatians 3:16, following the example of his divine Master, he employs not merely a single word, but a single letter of a word as the basis of an argument for a great doctrine. The blessing of justification which Abraham received has become that of the believer in Jesus Christ. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy *seed*, which is Christ."

The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews bases a similar argument on the word "all" in chapter 1:8, on the word "one" in 1:11, and on the phrase "yet once more" in 12:26, 27.

To recur to Paul's argument in Galatians, Archdeacon Farrar in one of his writings denies that by any possibility such a Hebraist as he, and such a master of Greek usage could have argued in this way. He says Paul must have known that the plural of the Hebrew and Greek terms for "seed" is never used by Hebrew or Greek writers to designate human offspring. It means, he says, various kinds of grain.

His artlessness is amusing. We accept his estimate of Paul's knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, says Professor Watts, he was certainly a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and as to his Greek he could not only write it but speak it as we know, and quote what suited his purpose from the Greek poets. But on this supposition we feel justified in asking Dr. Farrar whether a lexicographer in searching Greek authors for the meanings they attached to *spèrmata*, the Greek for "seeds," would not be inclined to add "human offspring" on so good an authority as Paul?

Nor indeed would they be limited to his authority, since Sophocles uses it in the same way, and Aeschylus.

"I was driven away from my country by my own offspring" (*spèrmata*)—literally by my own seeds, is what the former makes one of his characters say.

Dr. Farrar's rendering of *spèrmata* in Galatians 3:6 on the other hand would make nonsense if not sacrilege. "He saith not unto various kinds of grain as of many, but as of one, and to thy grain, which is Christ."

Granting then, what we thank no man for granting, that *spèrmata* means human offspring, it is evident that despite all opinions to the contrary, this passage sustains the teaching of an inspiration of Holy Writ extending to its very words.

3. *But the most unique argument for the inspiration of the words of Scripture is the relation which Jesus Christ bears to them.* In the first place, He Himself was inspired as to His words. In the earliest reference to His prophetic office (Deut. 18:18), Jehovah says, "I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak . . . all that I shall command Him." A limitation on His utterance which Jesus everywhere recognizes. "As My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things;" "the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak;" "whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak;" "I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me;" "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." (John 6:63; 8:26, 28, 40; 12:49, 50.)

The thought is still more impressive as we read of the relation of the Holy Spirit to the God-man. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor;" "He through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles;" "the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto Him;" "these things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand;" "He that hath an ear let him hear what the *Spirit* saith unto the churches" (Luke 4:18; Acts 1:2; Rev. 1:1; 2:1, 11). If the incarnate Word needed the unction of the Holy Ghost to give to

men the revelation He received from the Father in Whose bosom He dwells; and if the agency of the same Spirit extended to the words He spake in preaching the gospel to the meek or dictating an epistle, how much more must these things be so in the case of ordinary men when engaged in the same service? With what show of reason can one contend that any Old or New Testament writer stood, so far as his words were concerned, in need of no such agency."—*The New Apologetic*. p. 67, 68.

In the second place He used the Scriptures as though they were inspired as to their words. In Matthew 22: 31, 32, He substantiates the doctrine of the resurrection against the skepticism of the Sadducees by emphasizing the present tense of the verb "to be," *i.e.*, the word "am" in the language of Jehovah to Moses at the burning bush. In verses 42-5 of the same chapter He does the same for His own Deity by alluding to the second use of the word "Lord" in Psalm CX. "The LORD said unto my Lord . . . If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" In John 10: 34-6, He vindicates Himself from the charge of blasphemy by saying, "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If He called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?"

We have already seen Him (in Matthew 4) overcoming the tempter in the wilderness by three quotations from Deuteronomy without note or comment except, "*It is written.*" Referring to which Adolphe Monod says,

I know of nothing in the whole history of humanity, nor even in the field of divine revelation, that proves more clearly than this the inspiration of the Scriptures. What! Jesus Christ, the Lord of heaven and earth, calling to His aid in that solemn moment, Moses His servant? He Who speaks from heaven fortifying Himself against the temptations of hell by the word of him who spake from earth? How can we explain that spiritual mystery, that wonderful reversing of the order of things,

if for Jesus the words of Moses were not the words of God rather than those of men? How shall we explain it if Jesus were not fully aware that holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost?

I do not forget the objections which have been raised against the inspiration of the Scriptures, nor the real obscurity with which that inspiration is surrounded; if they sometimes trouble your hearts, they have troubled mine also. But at such times, in order to revive my faith, I have only to glance at Jesus glorifying the Scriptures in the wilderness and I have seen that for all who rely upon Him, the most embarrassing of problems is transformed into a historical fact, palpable and clear. Jesus no doubt was aware of the difficulties connected with the inspiration of the Scriptures, but did this prevent Him from appealing to their testimony with unreserved confidence? Let that which was sufficient for Him suffice for you. Fear not that the rock which sustained the Lord in the hour of His temptation and distress will give way because you lean too heavily upon it.

In the third place, Christ teaches that the Scriptures are inspired as to their words. In the Sermon on the Mount He said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

Here is testimony confirmed by an oath, for "verily" on the lips of the Son of Man carries such force. He affirms the indestructibility of the law, not its substance merely but its form, not the thought but the word.

"One jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law." The "jot" means the *yod*, the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet, while the "tittle" means the *horn*, a short projection in certain letters extending the base line beyond the upright one which rests upon it. A reader unaccustomed to the Hebrew needs a strong eye to see the tittle, but Christ guarantees that as a part of the sacred text neither the tittle nor the yod shall perish.

The elder Lightfoot, the Hebraist and rabbinical scholar of the Westminster Assembly time, has called attention to an interesting story of a certain letter *yod* found in the text of Deut. 32:18. It is in the word



*teshi*, to forsake, translated in the King James as "unmindful." Originally it seems to have been written smaller even than usual, *i.e.*, undersized, and yet notwithstanding the almost infinite number of times in which copies have been made, that little *yod* stands there today just as it ever did. Lightfoot spoke of it in the middle of the seventeenth century, and although two more centuries and a half have passed since then with all their additional copies of the book, yet it still retains its place in the sacred text. Its diminutive size is referred to in the margin, "but no hand has dared to add a hair's breadth to its length," so that we can still employ his words, and say that it is likely to remain there forever.

The same scholar speaks of the effect a slight change in the form of a Hebrew letter might produce in the substance of the thought for which it stands. He takes as an example two words, "Chalal" and "Halal," which differ from each other simply in their first radicals. The "Ch" in Hebrew is expressed by one letter the same as "H," the only distinction being a slight break or opening in the left limb of the latter. It seems too trifling to notice, but let that line be broken where it should be continuous, and "Thou shalt not *profane* the Name of thy God" in Leviticus 18:21, becomes "Thou shalt not *praise* the Name of thy God." Through that aperture, however small, the entire thought of the divine mind oozes out, so to speak, and becomes quite antagonistic to what was designed.

This shows how truly the thought and the word expressing it are bound together, and that whatever affects the one imperils the other. As another says, "The bottles are not the wine, but if the bottles perish, the wine is sure to be spilled." It may seem like narrow-mindedness to contend for this, and an evidence of enlightenment or liberal scholarship to treat it with indifference, but we should be prepared to take our stand with Jesus Christ in the premises, and if necessary, go outside the camp bearing our reproach.



## IV. DIFFICULTIES AND OBJECTIONS

That there are difficulties in the way of accepting a view of inspiration like this goes without saying. But to the finite mind there must always be difficulties connected with a revelation from the Infinite, and it cannot be otherwise. This has been mentioned before. Men of faith, and it is such we are addressing, and not men of the world, do not wait to understand or resolve all the difficulties associated with other mysteries of the Bible before accepting them as divine, and why should they do so in this case?

Moreover, Archbishop Whately's dictum is generally accepted, that we are not obliged to clear away every difficulty about a doctrine in order to believe it, always provided that the facts on which it rests are true. And particularly is this the case where the rejection of such a doctrine involves greater difficulties than its belief, as it does here.

For if this view of inspiration be rejected, what have its opponents to give in its place? Do they realize that any objections to it are slight in comparison with those to any other view that can be named? And do they realize that this is true because this view has the immeasurable advantage of agreeing with the plain declarations of Scripture on the subject? In other words, as Dr. Burrell says, those who assert the inerrancy of the Scripture autographs do so on the authority of God Himself, and to deny it is of a piece with the denial that they teach the forgiveness of sins or the resurrection from the dead. No amount of exegetical turning and twisting can explain away the assertions already quoted in these pages, to say nothing of the constant undertone of evidence we find in the Bible everywhere to their truth.

And speaking of this further, are we not justified in requiring of the objector two things? First, on any fair basis of scientific investigation, is he not obliged to

dispose of the evidence here presented before he impugns the doctrine it substantiates? And second, after having disposed of it, is he not equally obligated to present the Scriptural proof of whatever other view of inspiration he would have us accept? Has he ever done this, and if not, are we not further justified in saying that it cannot be done? But let us consider some of the difficulties.

1. *There are the so-called discrepancies or contradictions between certain statements of the Bible and the facts of history or natural science.* The best way to meet these is to treat them separately as they are presented, but when you ask for them you are not infrequently met with silence. They are hard to produce, and when produced, who is able to say that they belong to the original parchments? As we are not contending for an inerrant translation, does not the burden of proof rest with the objector?

But some of these "discrepancies" are easily explained. They do not exist between statements of the Bible and facts of science, but between erroneous interpretations of the Bible and immature conclusions of science. The old story of Galileo is in point, who did not contradict the Bible in affirming that the earth moves round the sun but only the false theological assumptions about it. In this way advancing light has removed many of these discrepancies, and it is fair to presume with Dr. Charles Hodge that further light would remove all.

2. *There are the differences in the narratives themselves.* In the first place, the New Testament writers sometimes change important words in quoting from the Old Testament, which it is assumed could not be the case if in both instances the writers were inspired. But it is forgotten that in the Scriptures we are dealing not so much with different human authors as with one Divine Author. It is a principle in ordinary literature that an author may quote himself as he pleases, and give a different turn to an expression here and there as a

changed condition of affairs renders it necessary or desirable. Shall we deny this privilege to the Holy Spirit? May we not find, indeed, that some of these supposed misquotations show such progress of truth, such evident application of the teaching of an earlier dispensation to the circumstances of a later one, as to afford a confirmation of their divine origin rather than an argument against it?

We offered illustrations of this earlier, but to those would now add Isaiah 59:20 quoted in Romans 11:26, and Amos 9:11 quoted in Act 15:16. And to any desiring to further examine the subject we would recommend the valuable work of Professor Franklin Johnson, of Chicago University, entitled "The Quotations in the New Testament from the Old."

Another class of differences, however, is where the *same event* is sometimes given differently by different writers. Take that most frequently used by the objectors, the inscription on the cross, recorded by all the evangelists and yet differently by each. How can such records be inspired, it is asked.

It is to be remembered in reply, that the inscription was written in three languages calling for a different arrangement of the words in each case, and that one evangelist may have translated the Hebrew, and another the Latin, while a third recorded the Greek. It is not said that any one gave the *full* inscription, nor can we affirm that there was any obligation upon them to do so. Moreover, no one contradicts any other, and no one says what is untrue.

Recalling what was said about our having to deal not with different human authors but with one Divine Author, may not the Holy Spirit here have chosen to emphasize some one particular fact, or phase of a fact of the inscription for a specific and important end? Examine the records to determine what this fact may have been. Observe that whatever else is omitted, all the narratives record the momentous circumstances that

the Sufferer on the cross was THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Could there have been a cause for this? What was the charge preferred against Jesus by His accusers? Was He not rejected and crucified because He said He was the King of the Jews? Was not this the central idea Pilate was providentially guided to express in the inscription? And if so, was it not that to which the evangelists should bear witness? And should not that witness have been borne in a way to dispel the thought of collusion in the premises? And did not this involve a variety of narrative which should at the same time be in harmony with truth and fact? And do we not have this very thing in the four gospels?

These accounts supplement, but do not contradict each other. We place them before the eye in the order in which they are recorded.

This is Jesus	THE KING OF THE JEWS
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	THE KING OF THE JEWS
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This is	THE KING OF THE JEWS
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Jesus of Nazareth	THE KING OF THE JEWS
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The entire inscription evidently was "This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews," but we submit that the foregoing presents a reasonable argument for the differences in the records.

3. *There is the variety in style.* Some think that if all the writers were alike inspired and the inspiration extended to their words, they must all possess the same style—as if the Holy Spirit had but one style!

Literary style is a method of selecting words and putting sentences together which stamps an author's work with the influence of his habits, his condition in society, his education, his reasoning, his experience, his imagination and his genius. These give his mental and moral physiognomy and make up his style.

But is not God free to act with or without these fixed laws? There are no circumstances which tinge His views or reasonings, and He has no idiosyncrasies of speech, and no mother tongue through which He expresses His character, or leaves the finger mark of genius upon His literary fabrics.

It is a great fallacy then, as Dr. Thomas Armitage once said, to suppose that uniformity of verbal style must have marked God's authorship in the Bible, had He selected its words. As the author of all styles, rather does He use them all at His pleasure. He bestows all the powers of mental individuality upon His instruments for using the Scriptures, and then uses their powers as He will to express His mind by them.

Indeed, the variety of style is a necessary proof of the freedom of the human writers, and it is this which among other things convinces us that, however controlled by the Holy Spirit, they were not mere machines in what they wrote.

Consider God's method in nature. In any department of vegetable life there may be but one genus, while its members are classified into a thousand species. From the bulbous root come the tulip, the hyacinth, the crocus, and the lily in every shape and shade, without any cause either of natural chemistry or culture. It is exclusively attributable to the variety of styles which the mind of God devises. And so in the sacred writings. His mind is seen in the infinite variety of expression which dictates the wording of every book. To quote Armitage again, "I cannot tell how the Holy Spirit suggested the words to the writers any more than some other man can tell how He suggested the thoughts to them. But if diversity of expression proves that He did not choose the words, the diversity of ideas proves that He did not dictate the thoughts, for the one is as varied as the other."

William Cullen Bryant was a newspaper man but a poet; Edmund Clarence Stedman was a Wall Street broker and also a poet. What a difference in style there



was between their editorials and commercial letters on the one hand, and their poetry on the other! Is God more limited than a man?

4. *There are certain declarations of Scripture itself.* Does not Paul say in one or two places, "I speak as a man," or "After the manner of man?" Assuredly, but is he not using the arguments common among men for the sake of elucidating a point? And may he not as truly be led of the Spirit to do that, and to record it, as to do or say anything else? Of course, what he quotes from men is not of the same essential value as what he receives directly from God, but the *record* of the quotation is as truly inspired.

There are two or three other utterances of his of this character in the 7th chapter of 1 Corinthians, where he is treating of marriage. At verse 6 he says, "I speak this by permission, not of commandment," and what he means has no reference to the source of his message but the subject of it. In contradiction to the false teaching of some, he says Christians are permitted to marry, but not commanded to do so. At verse 10 he says, "Unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord," while at verse 12 there follows, "but to the rest speak I, not the Lord." Does he declare himself inspired in the first instance, and not in the second? By no means, but in the first he is alluding to what the Lord spake on the subject while here in the flesh, and in the second to what he, Paul, is adding thereto on the authority of the Holy Spirit speaking through him. In other words, putting his own utterances on equality with those of our Lord, he simply confirms their inspiration.

At verse 40 he uses a puzzling expression, "I think also that I have the Spirit of God." As we are contending only for an inspired record, it would seem easy to say that here he records a doubt as to whether he was inspired, and hence everywhere else in the absence of such record of doubt the inspiration is to be assumed. But this would be begging the question, and we prefer the

solution of others that the answer is found in the condition of the Corinthian church at that time. His enemies had sought to counteract his teachings, claiming that they had the Spirit of God. Referring to the claim, he says with justifiable irony, "I think also that I have the Spirit of God" (R.V.). "I think" in the mouth of one having apostolic authority, says Professor Watts, may be taken as carrying the strongest assertion of the judgment in question. The passage is something akin to another in the same epistle at the 14th chapter, verse 37, where he says, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."

Time forbids further amplification on the difficulties and objections nor is it necessary, since there is not one that has not been met satisfactorily to the man of God and the child of faith again and again.

But there is an obstacle to which we would call attention before concluding—not a difficulty or objection, but a real obstacle, especially to the young and insufficiently instructed. It is the illusion that this view of inspiration is held only by the unlearned. An illusion growing out of still another as to who constitute the learned.

There is a popular impression that in the sphere of theology and religion these latter are limited for the most part to the higher critics and their relatives, and the more rationalistic and iconoclastic the critic the more learned he is esteemed to be. But the fallacy of this is seen in that the qualities which make for a philologist, an expert in human languages, or which give one a wide acquaintance with literature of any kind, in other words the qualities of the higher critic, depend more on memory than judgment, and do not give the slightest guarantee that their possessors can draw a sound conclusion from what they know.

As the author of "Faith and Inspiration" puts it, the work of such a scholar is often like that of a quarryman

to an architect. Its entire achievement, though immensely valuable in its place, is just a mass of raw and formless material until a mind gifted in a different direction, and possessing the necessary taste and balance shall reduce or put it into shape for use. The perplexities of astronomers touching Halley's comet is in point. They knew facts that common folks did not know, but when they came to generalize upon them, the man on the street knew that he should have looked in the west for the phenomenon when they bade him look in the east.

Much is said for example about an acquaintance with Hebrew and Greek, and no sensible man will underrate them for the theologian or the Bible scholar, but they are entirely unnecessary to an understanding of the doctrine of inspiration or any other doctrine of Holy Writ. The intelligent reader of the Bible in the English tongue, especially when illuminated by the Holy Spirit, is abundantly able to decide upon these questions for himself. He cannot determine how the Holy Spirit operated on the minds of the sacred penmen because that is not revealed, but he can determine on the results secured because that *is* revealed. He can determine whether the inspiration covers all the books, and whether it includes not only the substance but the form, not only the thoughts but the words.

We have spoken of scholars and of the learned, let us come to names. We suppose Dr. Sanday, of Oxford, is a scholar, and the Archbishop of Durham, and Dean Burgon, and Professor Orr, of Glasgow, and Principal Forsyth, of Hackney College, and Sir Robert Anderson, and Dr. Kuyper, of Holland, and President Patton of Princeton, and Howard Osgood of the Old Testament Revision Committee and Matthew B. Riddle of the New, and G. Frederick Wright and Albert T. Clay, the archaeologists, and Presidents Moorehead and Mullins, and C. I. Scofield, and Luther T. Townsend, for twenty-five years professor in the Theological School of Boston University, and Arthur T. Pierson of the Missionary Review

of the World, and a host of other living witnesses—Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Lutherans, Methodists, Reformed Dutch.

We had thought John Calvin a scholar, and the distinguished Bengel, and Canon Faussett, and Tregelles, and Auberlen, and Van Oosterzee, and Charles Hodge and Henry B. Smith, and so many more that it were foolishness to recall them. These men may not stand for every statement in these pages, they might not care to be quoted as holding technically the verbal theory of inspiration for reasons already named, but they will affirm the heart of the contention and testify to their belief in an inspiration of the Sacred Oracles which includes the words.

Once when the writer was challenged by the editor of a secular daily to name a single living scholar who thus believed, he presented that of a chancellor of a great university, and was told that he was not the kind of scholar that was meant! The kind of scholar not infrequently meant by such opposers is the one who is seeking to destroy faith in the Bible as the Word of God, and to substitute in its place a Bible of his own making.

The *Outlook* had an editorial recently, entitled "Whom Shall We Believe?" in which the writer reaffirmed the platitudes that living is a vital much more than an intellectual process, and that truth of the deeper kind is distilled out of experience rather than logical processes. This is the reason he said why many things are hidden from the so-called wise, who follow formal methods of exact observation, and are revealed to babes and sucklings who know nothing of these methods, but are deep in the process of living. No spectator ever yet understood a great contemporary human movement into which he did not enter.

Does this explain why the cloistered scholar is unable to accept the supernatural inspiration of the Scriptures while the men on the firing line of the Lord's army believe in it even to the very words? Does it explain the



faith of our missionaries in foreign lands? Is this what led J. Hudson Taylor to Inland China, and Dr. Guinness to establish the work upon the Congo, and George Mueller and William Quarrier to support the orphans at Bristol and the Bridge of Weirs? Is this—the belief in the plenary inspiration of the Bible—the secret of the evangelistic power of D. L. Moody, and Chapman, and Torrey, and Gipsy Smith, and practically every evangelist in the field, for to the extent of our acquaintance there are none of these who doubt it? Does this tell why “the best sellers on the market,” at least among Christian people, have been the devotional and expository books of Andrew Murray, and Miller and Meyer, and writers of that stamp? Is this why the plain people have loved to listen to preachers like Spurgeon, and McLaren, and Campbell Morgan, and Len Broughton and A. C. Dixon and have passed by men of the other kind? It is, in a word, safe to challenge the whole Christian world for the name of a man who stands out as a winner of souls who does not believe in the inspiration of the Bible as it has been sought to be explained in these pages.

But we conclude with a kind of concrete testimony—that of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America, and of a date as recent as 1893. The writer is not a Presbyterian, and, therefore, with the better grace can ask his readers to consider the character and the intellect represented in such an assembly. Here are some of our greatest merchants, our greatest jurists, our greatest educators, our greatest statesmen, as well as our greatest missionaries, evangelists and theologians. There may be seen as able and august a gathering of representatives of Christianity in other places and on other occasions, but few that can surpass it. For sobriety of thought, for depth as well as breadth of learning, for wealth of spiritual experience, for honesty of utterance, and virility of conviction, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America must command attention and respect throughout the world. And this is what it



said on the subject we are now considering at its gathering in the city of Washington, the capital of the nation, at the date named:

THE BIBLE AS WE NOW HAVE IT, IN ITS VARIOUS TRANSLATIONS AND REVISIONS, WHEN FREED FROM ALL ERRORS AND MISTAKES OF TRANSLATORS, COPYISTS AND PRINTERS, (IS) THE VERY WORD OF GOD, AND CONSEQUENTLY WHOLLY WITHOUT ERROR.

### A CONSERVATIVE PRESBYTERIAN'S UNDERSTANDING OF "INERRANCY" <sup>1</sup>

. . . It has been said . . . that our Standards have no declaration as to the inerrancy of the Scriptures. Certainly not in the narrow and foolish sense in which some of the so-called liberals are interpreting that word, "inerrancy." A study of the three Assemblies which made the declaration as to the inerrancy of the Scriptures shows that this declaration was made in view of the denial of, or the refusal to affirm, certain great New Testament facts such as the virgin birth of our Lord, His bodily resurrection, and that He worked miracles. I feel sure that I am speaking not only for myself, but for the great number in our church who are now protesting against non-evangelical teachings in our pulpits, when I say that by the inerrancy of the Scriptures it is not meant that there can be no discrepancy between numerals in Kings or Chronicles, or that (although the subject is still discussed by scholars) in the passage where reference is made in Matthew's gospel to what was done with the thirty pieces of silver, the supposed fulfilled prophecy could not have been referred to Jeremiah instead of Zechariah, where it seems properly to belong. That is not what we mean, and I am sure you must be aware of it, when we speak of the inerrancy of the Scriptures. We mean, for example, that when the gospels tell us that

<sup>1</sup> By Rev. Clarence E. Macartney, in a letter to Henry van Dyke. Presbyterian. 93. No. 51: 7. December 20, 1923.

Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary, that He died a sin-offering, that He rose from the grave with the marks of His passion in His body, and that He walked on the sea and stilled the tempest, and fed a multitude of people with a few loaves and fishes, they are telling us what is fact.

## B. IN DEFENSE OF THE NEW VIEW

The Bible is inspired as it is inspired, and not as we may think it ought to be inspired.—*William Newton Clarke*.<sup>1</sup>

A man has no idea how great a man Paul was, or how great his teaching, as long as he feels obliged to agree with him.—*William Newton Clarke, quoting from a friend*.<sup>2</sup>

## FUNDAMENTALISM, MODERNISM AND THE BIBLE<sup>3</sup>

In discussing the nature of the Bible as conceived by fundamentalism and modernism, it is apparent that a large body of belief regarding this collection of writings is held in common. Both hold that the Bible is inspired of God, and is in a unique sense the word of God; both hold that it is the record of a disclosure of the divine nature and purpose in history; both believe that it possesses moral and religious authority excelling by broad diameters that quality as exhibited in any other documents; and both believe that rightly understood it is an adequate standard of appeal in matters of the spiritual life. It would seem that agreement on these elemental aspects of the Scripture, however widely people may vary in precise definition, would afford a common ground of faith and conduct. Yet such seems to be far from the case. As contrasted with the confessors of other religions, such as Buddhism and Islam, the difference between the two groups is not so obvious. But when brought into contact in the attempt to make clear their respective opinions, the chasm is evidently too wide and deep to be crossed. There is no virtue in attempting to obscure this fact.

<sup>1</sup> *Sixty Years with the Bible*. p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> *Sixty Years with the Bible*. p. 92.

<sup>3</sup> *Christian Century*. 41: 424-5. April 3, 1924.

Fundamentalists regard the Bible as the product of the divine mind revealed through human instruments much as a man of business dictates his correspondence to secretaries and stenographers. They say that if it is to be accepted as the word of God, then it is reasonable to infer that the method of its communication has been such as to leave unimpaired its validity as an accurate and authoritative record. The authors of the various books doubtless exercised a limited amount of freedom in their approach to the themes of which they spoke. But that freedom was wholly eliminated in relation to the subject matter and even the verbal form of their messages. If the Bible cannot be trusted to provide its readers with the very thoughts and words of the Holy Spirit, then it is worthless as a guide in religion. Indeed it is the claim made by the book itself that it is the product of holy men who spoke as they were moved by the Spirit. All Scripture is by inspiration of God. If there are minor variations in text and narrative, such as those pointed out by textual and literary students, these are the result of human fallibility in the transmission of an originally perfect record. And the fact that the meanings of numerous passages in the Bible are made to depend upon the precise term that is employed, proves that the inspiration of the Scriptures applies to their verbal form, and not merely to their general tone and direction.

On the other hand, the Modernist starts with no preconception as to what the Bible ought to be, but is interested to discover what it actually reveals regarding its origin and nature. He perceives that the Protestant reaction from the papal dogma of an infallible church resulted in the opposing doctrine of an infallible Bible, and that neither of these claims rests upon valid grounds. The Bible is not a supernaturally produced or safeguarded collection of documents, but the honest and reverent work of men living at various periods in the history of the Hebrew and Jewish people, over an interval

of more than a thousand years ; that it is the record of the most notable chapters in the history of religion ; that its contents include legislation, sermons and sermonic use of narratives dealing with former and current events, reflections upon the most outstanding religious problems, hymns of the faith, apocalyptic hopes, and most important of all, a body of writings dealing with the life and message of Jesus Christ and the growth of the Christian society in its earliest years. These writings lay no claim to exactness in matters of history, chronology or science ; yet their record is so adequate regarding the Hebrew faith as disclosed in the volumes of the Old Testament, and the nature of Jesus and the movement he inspired in history as described in the New, that interest in the mere niceties of narrative, the accuracies of quotation and the details of ritual is thrown into lesser significance by the tremendous sweep and impulse of these movements that make clear the divine activity in human life.

It is a commonplace to say that the Bible is inspired. To be sure, that expression is nowhere used by the writers of the Scriptures to characterize its contents. Paul used it not only in reference to the Old Testament, but evidently of a much larger collection of holy writings than we now admit into the canon. But inspiration is a word applied to so many other products of human genius that it is only a weak and pallid term to set forth the rich complex of values that appear in the Bible. In the sense in which it can be applied to the Biblical writings at all it does not refer primarily to any beauties or urgencies that inhere in texts and documents. It is rather a certain moral passion in the lives of such forceful personalities as are portrayed in the Bible and had part in its production, men like the prophets who were moved, urged on, pushed out, by their deep concern to assist in the realization of the divine purpose for their age ; or who like the apostles had caught according to their varying capacity something of the social, ethical and spiritual contagion of



the life of Jesus, and could not rest until in turn they had exhausted their energies in transmitting it to other men. Some part of this disclosure of the divine life and program they incarnated in their own characters; some smaller part they uttered in their preaching; and a portion, less than either, they were able to record in those masterful writings which are the most precious of the religious inheritances of the race. The Scriptures are as various as their writers, and it is that same variety of material, as the productions of men filled with a holy passion to make known the good news of the divine purpose in the world, that makes them the vital, compelling, authoritative messages they are. There is no term by which the unique character of the Bible can be defined, least of all the much used and misused term inspiration. The Bible is just the sum total of the rich and varied elements which appear in it and in no other body of literature. Therein lies its distinction and its finality among the books of religion.

Both Fundamentalists and Modernists believe in a certain element of progress in the revelation which the Bible makes of the character and purposes of God. But this element has very different values as assessed by the two groups. Most Fundamentalists would concede that there is movement in the story of religion as portrayed in the Scriptures. Even the covenant theologians of the eighteenth century emphasized that fact, and defined the pre-Mosaic period as the starlight age, the classical epoch of Hebrew history as the moonlight age, and the Christian dispensation as the sunlight age. God was represented as releasing from time to time some fresh increment of an eternal revelation already complete from the beginning. In so far as the Fundamentalist is willing to depart in the least from his normal attitude of belief in a level Bible, all parts of which are of equal validity, it is to adopt some principle of segmentation which assigns to the dispensations fixed and stratified forms of religious

teaching just as fossil remains are assumed to have been placed in their appropriate settings by creative act at the beginning.

The Modernist on the other hand believes that the self-revelation of God, like creation, is a continuous process. It is the nature of a father to make known his character and purposes in all his relations with his children. All human history is the record of the divine effort at self-interpretation to the race. No one people has been the sole beneficiary of this process, for God has never left Himself without witness among any people. But some of His children have understood Him better than others, and to them He has been able to make fuller disclosure than to the rest. These disclosures have not been arbitrary and partial acts of revelation to special and favored groups. But those who best apprehended the meaning of the divine work in creation, in human experience and in the disciplines of the years, were able to speak a fuller message than the rest. Among the races some have shown marked aptitudes for particular tasks. The unique quality of some of the Hebrew people was their perception of moral and religious values as made clear to them in their relations with God. These values were best interpreted by the prophets of Israel, and were brought to their supreme expression in the life and ministry of Jesus. The Bible is therefore the record of these expanding ideals as they were given utterance and illustration from age to age in a unique history. The beginnings were lowly and crude. The early prophets did not hesitate to use brute force to emphasize their mandates, as when Elijah put to death the priests of Baal at the Kishon, or Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord. But gradually they learned the lesson that the best instrument of the preacher is a voice and not a sword. Those of one generation corrected the mistakes of their earlier brethren, as when Hosea denounced the bloody reform of Jehu, which had received the approbation of Elisha and

his contemporaries. The ascending pathway of the moral leaders of Israel was marked out by their expanding vision of God and their deepening sense of His purpose in history; not by the crudities and vagaries into which their inheritance of race hatreds and superstitions sometimes betrayed them. The Bible frankly discloses both the greatness and the limitations of these men of God, and shows that from age to age the truths of morality and religion were given clearer and fuller announcement until they found their complete manifestation in the Christ. And that revelation made in its fullest form by Him goes on disclosing its larger meaning through the centuries. Revelation is not a closed volume. Holy men of yesterday and today still speak as they are moved by the Holy Spirit.

The Fundamentalists believe in the complete authority of the Bible as a text-book of faith and conduct. Its commands are not to be questioned. They are all a part of the word of God, and not to be smoothed down into any form of compromise. The literal inspiration of the Bible leaves no room for any modification of its rules of behavior. If the men of this school do not set the same store by the dietetic laws of Leviticus as they do by the Ten Commandments, it is only unintentional concession to modern views. If Paul's rabbinical arguments in Galatians seem less convincing than the utterances of the Sermon on the Mount, it is only that the method of reasoning is more remote from our ways of thinking. All are alike, the word of God. It is only proper reverence to accept them as such, and to conform intellect and will to their control. Not only in matters of instruction as to faith and conduct is the Bible authoritative, but as well in the area of fact. All statements made regarding matters of record are to be accepted with unquestioning assent. The accounts of creation, of the long-lived patriarchs, of the miracles in the lives of the prophets and the apostles, however difficult to understand or to evaluate

as worthful for religion, are to be taken at their face value. This alone is the attitude of faith in the authority of the Holy Scripture.

The Modernist also holds the Bible to be authoritative in the field of religion and morals. But he is confronted at each step of his study with the fact that everywhere the Scriptures make their appeal to intelligence and conscience, and demand of their readers discrimination between fact and fiction, between formal command and figure of speech, between abiding principles and temporary admonitions. To refuse to make such obvious distinctions in the use of Scripture is to abdicate the employment of the rational faculties which are as much the gift of God as are the Scriptures themselves. It requires no labored argument to demonstrate the fact that there are varying levels of authoritative appeal in the Bible. The moral and spiritual teachings of Jesus and His first interpreters require no elaborate defense. They are self-evidencing to a degree not shared by the ethical standards of earlier teachers. The authority of the Bible is reasonable and self-attesting, not arbitrary or mechanical. Its commands are obligatory not because they are enshrined in a holy book but because they are eternally true and self-vindicating. It is the challenge which the Bible offers to the highest intelligence and the most discriminating judgment which constitutes its unique authority.

And the Bible is the final authority in matters of the holy life. The Fundamentalist regards it as such because it is the last word from God and cannot be superseded. The Modernist regards this as too simple and easy a solution of the matter. He recognizes the advancing nature of the divine revelation, and is undisturbed by the possibility that yet fuller disclosures of God's nature and purpose may take form. To deny this would be to assume an omniscience which no open-minded witness of the divine work in the world would claim. No one who

rightly estimates the moral and spiritual finality of Jesus is fearful that He will be displaced in the leadership of the race, or that the book which is the record of His life and message will be pushed from its position as the supreme literary guide in those matters which most concern our human life.

## WE SHOULD NOT CLAIM BIBLICAL INFALLIBILITY<sup>1</sup>

The Fundamentalists assert that the Bible is without error and infallible, and, therefore, authoritative. But when the inquiring mind asks for the basis of the belief in the inerrancy of Scripture it is told that it is based upon the fact that multitudes have long believed it, at least since the days of the Reformation. In other words, the basis of the belief in the inerrancy of the Bible is the prestige of the opinion itself.

But such prestige loses its force when we reflect that multitudes as great believed for as long a period that the earth was flat, or later that the sun moved around it.

If we seek a further basis for belief in the inerrancy of the Bible we are told that the Bible itself claims to be inerrant, and that its claims are self-authenticating. But on examination we find in the Bible no such claim. And even if we did find it there, we should be compelled to question whether any such claim could be self-authenticated. A government inspector came into a store the other day. He saw a piece of metal on the counter plainly marked "One Pound." But he could not accept the claim as self-authenticated. He must apply to it the tests to which all weights and measures must be submitted. Infallibility cannot be established by self-authenticating authority; only by evidence.

The greatest of all books, undoubtedly, is the Bible, the supreme literature of the spiritual life, a record of

<sup>1</sup> By Rev. Robert A. Ashworth, D.D. *Christian Work*. 116: 268-70. March 1, 1924. *Modernism and Christian Assurance*.



the unfolding spiritual experience of the race which must remain an invaluable guide and corrective for all who are seeking God, but it is not infallible or inerrant, nor does it claim to be so.

## LUTHER'S FREE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE BIBLE<sup>1</sup>

Christ is the Master, the Scriptures are the servant, Here is the true touchstone for testing all the books; we must see whether they work the works of Christ or not. . . . In fact, the Gospel of John and his First Epistle, the Epistles of Paul, particularly those to the Romans, the Galatians, and the Ephesians, and the First Epistle of Peter, these are the books which show thee Christ and teach thee all that it is good and necessary for thee to know, though thou shouldst never hear nor see any other books. As for the others, the Epistle of James is a veritable epistle of straw, for there is nothing evangelical in it.

Without any doubt, the prophets had studied the books of Moses, and the late ones those of their predecessors and filled with the Spirit of God they committed their good thoughts to writing. But this is not to say that these doctors, scrutinizing the Scriptures, did not sometimes find wood, hay, and stubble, and not always gold, silver, or diamonds. Nevertheless the essential abides and the fire consumes the rest.

## HOW THE BIBLE LED ONE STUDENT TO THE FREER VIEW<sup>2</sup>

During the seventies I was usually in attendance upon a weekly conference of ministers. . . . More than once

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Sabatier, in *Religions of Authority*. p. 158-9, from *Luther's Works*. Erlangen ed., lxii, p. 128-33; lxiii, p. 157-379.

<sup>2</sup> By W. N. Clarke. *Sixty Years with the Bible*. p. 102ff. Copyright (1912), Charles Scribners' Sons. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

in the decade the advent question was taken up. . . . The premillennial and postmillennial views of the advent were presented, elaborated, and defended, sometimes with conspicuous power. It was not in vain, though the results were not such as the disputants were seeking. In consequence of the discussion several things became clear to me, some at once and some on further reflection.

The first thing that I observed was that neither of the two theories could be better defended from the Bible than the other. Either could be defended perfectly well, by making proper selection of proof-texts. The Bible contained the confident prediction of an early advent, and at the same time it contained an outlook upon the future that neither included an early advent nor had place for one. I observed that both doctrines were obtainable from the Bible, but was impressed by the fact that neither one was the doctrine of the Bible as a whole. In the sense of being found in the Scriptures, both were Scriptural: but in the better sense of rightly representing the Scriptures, neither was Scriptural. . . .

. . . It was borne in upon me that the Bible contains material for two opposite and irreconcilable doctrines about the early return of Christ to this world. Both doctrines cannot be true: one of them at least must rest upon misjudgment. Since this is a fact, it certainly cannot be that I am required to believe all that the Bible says because the Bible says it. If either one of the theories is true, no matter which, I certainly am not bound by the testimony that the Bible bears in favor of the other. Whatever its nature may be, the book in which these facts are found cannot have been given me by God as a book that bears His own authority in support of all its statements. The book from which these two theories can be drawn is of necessity a different book from that. Thus the Bible itself, upon examination, shows me that it is not a book infallible throughout, in which error does not exist, and that I am not required to say that it is.

. . . The discussion showed that upon one point at least the early Christians, including apostles and writers of the New Testament, were mistaken—not only could be mistaken, but were. They believed that their Lord was soon to return to this world in visible glory. He did not so return: hence they cherished an expectation that was wrong. . . . It is true that I heard some of the best men I knew laboring hard to show that the expectation did not exist, but their labor was in vain. I saw that it did exist, and that it proved to be a false expectation. . . .

From all this it followed that I was not obliged to agree with these writers in all that they had written, or to look upon them as infallible guides. It did not follow that, therefore, I ought to throw the Bible away, and I am thankful that that foolish suggestion so often supposed to attend upon such discoveries did not occur to me. But it did follow that I was not required to accept all statements in the Bible as true and all views that it contained as correct. And it was not some outside heretic or unbeliever that was persuading me to this conclusion: I was led to it by examination of the book itself. Its own contents bore witness to its errancy. . . .

I confessed to myself that in my heart I did not know what an atonement was, or what was meant when the Son of God was called the propitiation for our sins. . . . I studied the Bible faithfully. But I found there various views of what Christ had done—one set of ideas in Paul, another in the Johannine writings, and another in the Epistle to the Hebrews. I perceived that these were views of the great reality from various points, and that they could not be combined into one clear doctrine. I perceived, too, that it was not possible for any mind to agree with all these utterances, except in the broadest sense, if indeed a modern mind could really think any of them precisely as the writers thought them long ago. So I could not solve my problem by adducing the testimony of Scripture concerning the atonement as clear and final.

. . . The question lay in the realm of ethics. The decisive fact is the character of God. The God whom Jesus has revealed to us has acted in accordance with what He is. . . . It was morally impossible for me to believe that He has done anything for our salvation that does not accord with and express His own character. If a voice of inspiration or a voice from heaven had told me that He had, I should have been compelled to say that the voice was not from God. . .

. . . I was inquiring for myself what the atonement was—not what the Old Testament had foreshadowed, or what Paul thought it was, or what it seemed to be in the light of the Jewish law, or what the church had taught, or what theologians had built up into doctrine, but what it really was, in the best moral and spiritual light that the Christian revelation ministered to the inquiry. . . . I could no more take my conclusion from dictation of the Bible than I could from dictation of the church. I was constrained to go back of both. . . . The Bible was my indispensable and invaluable helper in the quest, but it had not been offered to me by God as containing the ready and final answer to my question, as I once supposed it had. . . .

. . . I was not asking what the Bible specifically said upon my theme, but was taking the large truths that the Bible brought me, and wielding them as my instruments in a spiritual work of inquiry. I was not collecting the testimony of authoritative passages; I was moving in the spirit of the Bible toward apprehension of the great salvation of God. . . . I was acting on the principle that the Bible was made for man, not man for the Bible, as I am sure the Master would have me act. . . . I had entered upon freedom of inquiry, and a broad world was before me, which I was sure that I should find to be the world of God. And the Bible had become the instrument of my liberty.

RELIGIOUS PROGRESS ILLUSTRATED  
WITHIN THE BIBLE<sup>1</sup>

For one thing, there are some of us here this morning who were brought up in a system of Christian thinking in which, if we had remained, we would have been compelled either to give up our Christianity or else to commit deadly assault and battery on our growing intelligence. We are thanking God today that we moved out from that Haran into a freer land. To make this concrete, how many of us at one time thought that the inspiration of the Bible made it from beginning to end a book upon a common infallible level. From Genesis to Revelation it was to us a book of equal spiritual insight and of equal authority. To be sure, even when we were boys we discovered to our anxiety that in the early manuscripts of the Bible God walks as a man in the garden in the cool of the day or that on a mountain top He hides Moses in a rock's cleft and puts His hand across the cleft so that Moses cannot see His face and yet can see His back, while in later manuscripts in the Bible we keep running across words like these: "No man hath seen God at any time." To be sure, even when we were boys we discovered to our discomfiture that in the early manuscripts of the Bible God gives directions for the slaughter of the Amalekites, men, women and children, without mercy; that directions are put on the lips of the Almighty for atrocities as horrible as disgraced this last war, while in the later manuscripts of the Bible we keep running on passages like this: "God is love;" "He that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him;" "It is not the will of your father who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." To be sure, in the early manuscripts, God travels in a box, a holy box they call the Ark, and when they have the Ark the pres-

<sup>1</sup> From *Progressive Christianity*, a sermon preached by Harry Emerson Fosdick, in the First Presbyterian Church, New York, May 8, 1921.



ence of God is with them and when they lose the Ark they have lost the presence of God, and this Ark is so terrible a thing that when with all good-will a man tries to steady it, as Uzzah did when the oxen stumbled, he is smitten dead upon the spot, while in the latter manuscripts God is in no box nor even on a mountain. "Neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father . . . God is a spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth." "For in Him we live, and move, and have our being." To be sure, we found that in early manuscripts there is a most scrupulous interest in clean and unclean food, as if man's standing before the face of God were dependent upon his scrupulous care in the observance of a kosher diet, while in the later manuscripts Jesus sweeps the whole question away: "There is nothing from without the man, that going into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man."

If about this matter, or others like it, some one should say: "Must we not keep the faith of our fathers?" the answer is surely clear: "Of course we must keep the faith of our fathers, but what do you mean by *keeping* the faith?" This is Mother's Day. When you were born your mother wanted to keep you and she has kept you so that every year since you have loved her with a deeper understanding of her immeasurable grace. You are more deeply hers today than you were forty years ago, but she couldn't have kept you by keeping you a baby. If she had tried that she would have lost you. The only way to keep a living thing is to let it grow. We must keep the faith of our fathers, but the faith of our fathers is not dead; it is alive. It is like a tree, it must grow. It is like a river, it must flow. It is like Abraham, it must migrate. And the surest way to kill it is to make it stay in Haran.

## WHY THE OLD VIEW OF THE BIBLE IS IMPOSSIBLE <sup>1</sup>

The word criticism (from *κρίνω*, to judge) does not properly imply caviling or fault-finding; it means judgment, discernment, comprehension. Biblical criticism, which had its beginning, perhaps, in Spinoza's "Tractatus Theologico-Politicus," and has had a marvelous development in the past century, is simply an open-minded attempt to understand the various documents that make up the Bible, their dates, authorship, purpose, and meaning. Our increasing knowledge of nature, of history, of psychology, and of comparative religion, the reconstruction of more accurate texts through the discovery of new manuscripts and the patiently minute comparison of the thousands now available, the study of contemporary inscriptions and remains, of the development of the Hebrew and Greek languages and the precise meanings of their words, and the growth of a maturer historical method, that knows how to read between the lines of a narrative and discriminate trustworthy from unreliable materials—these manifold new resources have brought us to a far more intelligent appreciation of this mass of Jewish and Christian writings. Differences of opinion on many points still exist; and there are many things which we should like to know that must remain forever beyond reach of our investigation. But the general conclusions of modern scholarship with regard to the Bible "cannot be denied without denying the ordinary principles by which history is judged and evidence estimated. Nor can it be doubted that the same conclusions, upon any neutral field of investigation, would have been accepted without hesitation by all conversant with the subject." <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> By Durant Drake. *Problems of Religion*. p. 267-73, 275. Reprinted by permission of the author and holder of the copyright.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from the preface of Driver's *Introduction to the Old Testament*.

(1) It has, for one thing, been definitely proved that the traditional ascriptions of authorship of many of the Bible books are mistaken. The Pentateuch, for example, was not written till centuries after the time of Moses—as on the surface would seem probable from the fact that kings of Israel are mentioned therein, not to speak of the description of Moses' own death! These books have been proved to be compilations dating from the period of the exile, incorporating two parallel narratives of the eighth and ninth century, together with considerable later material; the parallel strands run side by side through a large part of them, and the compiler has not always well reconciled the divergent accounts. Again, few, if any, of the Psalms were written by David; most of them are post-exilic. Neither Ecclesiastes nor the Song of Solomon was written by Solomon. The greater part of the Book of Isaiah comes from a much later time. The probabilities are strongly against the authorship of the Gospels—with the exception of the Second Gospel—by the men whose names they bear. Some of the supposed epistles of Paul are certainly not from his hand, James is not by its reputed author, and 2 Peter is a barefaced forgery. The Book of Revelation is a medley of apocalyptic literature, some of it pre-Christian, none of it by the author of the Fourth Gospel. These commonplaces of Biblical scholarship can be substantiated by a study of any of the good recent introductions to Old and New Testament.

(2) But other facts have been brought to light much more significantly at variance with the old conceptions of the Bible. For one thing, many inconsistencies exist between different traditions that have both been incorporated. When one verse flatly contradicts another, it is only by a difficult evasion that the believer can preserve his devout belief in the truth of both. For instance—to mention but a few—in Acts 9:7, speaking of Paul's vision, we read, "And the men who journeyed with Him stood speechless, *hearing a voice*, but seeing no

man," while in Acts 22:9, which narrates the same experience, we read, "And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid;<sup>1</sup> but they *heard not the voice* of Him that spake to me." Again, the first three Gospels make Christ eat the Last Supper on the eve of the Passover, and die on that day, while the Fourth Gospel relates that He died on the day of preparation for the Passover. Of the same census we read in 2 Sam. 24:1, that the Lord commanded David to take it, and in 1 Chron. 21:1, that it was Satan that put it into his mind. The two genealogies of Christ—both purporting to trace his ancestry back to David through Joseph—are flatly contradictory of each other, as indeed both conflict with the tradition, also accepted in the same two Gospels, of the virgin birth, whereby Joseph was held to be not his father at all. The infancy and resurrection stories at the beginning and end of Matthew and Luke are in many respects mutually incompatible.

(3) Not merely inconsistent with one another, however, but obviously untrue, are many of the Biblical statements. For example, the world was not made in six days (which were real days, "morning and evening," to the narrator) nor in six geological epochs, except by a very arbitrary straining of facts. The order of creation given in Genesis differs from the order in which things really came into being. The sky is not a "firmament" (or partition) which divides the "waters which are under the firmament" from the "waters which are above the firmament." This whole account of creation, which is closely parallel to earlier Babylonian accounts, reflects a very primitive conception of nature. Again, not a few statements in the historical books have been proved untrue by extant monuments, and the records of surrounding nations; it is plain to the historical student that the Jewish chronicles are biased and to considerable extent untrustworthy. It is clear that the evangelists were in

<sup>1</sup> The original reads "were not afraid," which must be an unintentional misquotation.

many points mistaken in their views of the events of Jesus' life. And the author of Acts, by his irreconcilable differences from the statements of Paul, shows a radical misconception of the nature of some of the events in the early history of the church.

(4) But still more strikingly incompatible with the supernatural view of the Bible are the gross and immoral ideas that are mingled with its noble and elevating inspirations. No worse than contemporary cults, the Jahweh-worship of the Jews was at first no better; and even down to and beyond the times of Jesus certain ideas persisted that are repugnant to our humaner instincts. God's anger and desire for vengeance are repeatedly mentioned; and the picture the unprejudiced reader would form of this Jewish deity from many Old Testament passages is that of a cruel and blood-thirsty tyrant. He "hardens Pharaoh's heart" that He may punish the Egyptians in a spectacular manner; He throws stones down from heaven on Israel's foes; He commands the sun to stand still that more of them may be slain before dark; He bids His chosen people invade the land of a neighboring tribe, burn all their cities, slay all the males, adults and children, and all the married women, and keep the virgins for their own enjoyment; He slays seventy thousand innocent Israelites for David's sin in taking a census of the people. Jael and Rahab are praised, though guilty of the blackest crimes, because they were on Israel's side. To the usurper Jehu, who entraps and murders numbers of innocent people, including children, to establish his power, the Lord declares, "Thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes." Even the Psalms, with all their intense religious feeling, have much in them that is low and unworthy—whining complaints over troubles, anathemas upon other peoples whom the Jews hated, vindictive appeals to Jehovah to persecute them. "O daughter of Babylon," the psalmist says, "Happy shall he be that



rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little children against the stones!"

Even worse than the revengeful longings of the psalmist is the bitter threat of everlasting punishment for unbelievers in the Book of Revelation. He that worships falsely "shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night." Paul too had a grim and revolting side to his faith: . . . "[God] hath mercy on whom He will have mercy and whom He will He hardeneth. . . . Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?" And in one of the epistles we read, "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believe not the truth."

Surely such sentiments need no comment! In the light of them, to teach that the teachings of the Bible are throughout divine and authoritative is to barbarize our moral ideas; to claim that such words as these are inspired of God is to worship a God who is at times a very devil. Wicked dogmas have been based on some of these texts, cruelties have been justified by them. Our forefathers put poor old women to death because of the verse "A witch shall not live." Religious persecutors have pointed to the texts, "Constrain them to come in," and "Gather up the tares in bundles and burn them." The subjection of women has justified itself from the saying, "I will not suffer a woman to teach . . . but to be in silence."

These bits of dross amid the gold do not destroy the worth of the Bible, but they do make sharply against

the conception of it as everywhere inspired and authoritative. It is important, to get a right appreciation of it, that we face these facts. Indiscriminate praise hurts rather than helps in the long run. The Bible is a very human book; it pictures the progress of a very primitive people toward a love of the highest things; its writers are often mistaken, often biased, often possessed with illusions, sometimes possessed with human weakness and passion. We must read it as we would read any other book, passing lightly over the unhelpful parts, dwelling on what is true and elevating, and thus making it a stimulus, never a hindrance to our inward growth.

. . . Finally, how, or in what sense, has the Bible authority? In a word, its authority is that of the truth which it contains, no more. We cannot call a statement true simply because the Bible says so; but whatever of truth the mature experience of Christendom finds in the Bible demands our allegiance—not because it is in the Bible, but because it is true.

### PROFOUND EFFECTS OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM <sup>1</sup>

. . . [Biblical criticism] had had theological effects of the very greatest significance. It is not that simply our view of the Bible has changed as a result of it, but our whole view of religious authority has changed. As we have learned not to think of the Bible as a final and infallible authority, as the ultimate court of appeal in all matters of human concern, we have come to see that there is no such authority and that we need none. The result has been a change of perspective and a readjustment of values of simply untold consequence. Biblical criticism may seem often to concern itself with matters of minor importance and of very small religious interest,

<sup>1</sup> By A. C. McGiffert, president of Union Theological Seminary, New York. *American Journal of Theology*. 10: 326-7. July, 1916. *The Progress of Theological Thought During the Past Fifty Years*.

but it has cut deeper into the traditions of the past than any other single movement and has made our modern theological liberty possible. The conservatives who feared and opposed it in its early days, because they saw what a revolution it portended, were far more clear-sighted than most of the liberals, who thought that it meant simply a slight shifting of position, and imagined that they could retain religious and moral infallibility while giving up all other kinds. Fortunately, few realized all that was involved, or they would have feared to go forward, as Luther declared he would have feared to begin his reforming work had he known how far it would lead him. But it is now becoming clear that, largely through modern Biblical criticism, we have at last won that spiritual freedom which even the Reformers failed to attain, and without which permanent progress is impossible in religion as in everything else.

### THE THEORY OF VERBAL INSPIRATION CONVENIENT, BUT ABSURD AND UNNECESSARY<sup>1</sup>

If you ask why so absurd a theory held such long-continued sway over the minds of men, the answer is that the theory of verbal inspiration is the simplest of all possible theories, and the most easily managed. If you can say that God wrote this book from the first word to the last, you say something which a child can understand, and so long as you believe this you know exactly where you are. If anybody says there are mysteries in the Bible, you can reply there are mysteries in nature; if some one says there are contradictions in the Scriptures, you can say there are contradictions everywhere. If some one says there are pages here which are unsavory or which apparently have no significance, you can say that that is because we do not discern the

<sup>1</sup> By C. E. Jefferson. *Things Fundamental*. p. 115-16. Copyright (1903), T. Y. Crowell Company. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

hidden, spiritual meanings. If some one says there are moral atrocities sanctioned in the Bible, you can reply with indignation, "Who are you that you should find fault with God?" A tight, cast-iron theory is exceedingly satisfactory, because so long as you have it you know where you are, and any other theory, no matter what it may be, is loose and gets you into trouble. If you say there is a human element in the Bible, then who is going to tell which is human and which is divine? If you say there are errors in the Bible, how is a man to know what is error and what is truth? If you say that the Bible writers were mistaken in scientific matters, the question comes, may they not have been mistaken in everything? And so men say in their haste: all the Bible or none. I will swallow it whole, or I will have none of it. You say there are errors in it, then it is all falsehood; if these men were mistaken, then we have no revelation, we might as well burn up the Bible, the church is doomed to destruction, the world is going to the devil, let us all sit down and cry! That is the way men speak when they speak foolishly.

## GOD CAN USE FICTION AND MYTH AS WELL AS HISTORY <sup>1</sup>

If a vote should be taken among Christian people on the question as to what book should be added to the Scriptures if any addition could be made, a large majority would undoubtedly vote in favor of Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," which is fiction pure and simple from beginning to end. God has used that work of Bunyan's in a most marvellous way. He made use of the novels of Dickens to bring about great reforms in England. He has used "Black Beauty" to create tenderness for animals. If He uses fiction among Englishmen and

<sup>1</sup> By C. E. Jefferson. *Things Fundamental*. p. 130-3. Copyright (1903), T. Y. Crowell Company. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

Americans, why should He never have used fiction among the Jews?

But some one says that Jesus quoted this book [Jonah] as history. How do you know He did? He quoted it, but by His quotation we are not driven to infer that it is history. Every religious teacher draws his illustrations from books of poetry and from books of fiction as well as from books of history. I am constantly taking my illustrations from Shakespeare. Cordelia and King Lear, Rosalind and Jaques, Portia and Shylock, Romeo and Juliet, Othello and Desdemona—these are among my dearest friends. I quote their words just as I should quote the words of historic people. I should not hesitate to say in a sermon that “Just as the witches in ‘Macbeth’ poured various ingredients into a cauldron in order to form a hellish broth, so do evil spirits throw wicked thoughts and wicked feelings into human hearts, causing a hell broth to boil and bubble there.” I hope no man would go away and say, “That minister is superstitious, he believes in witches.” Now if you allow me, a religious teacher living in the twentieth century, to draw my illustrations from fiction, why not give Jesus of Nazareth the same privilege?

There is a further question, Is there such a thing as a myth in the Bible? Some one may hold up his hands in horror at this and say. “Now, please don’t! It is bad enough to have poetry and fiction in the Bible; but if you make out that a part of the Scriptures is myth, then the sacred book must go.” Let us see in the first place what a myth is. Some people do not know. They think that a myth is a lie. A myth is nothing but a story that has come down from an immemorial past. It is a story, the author of which is unknown, the origin of which no one can ascertain. Are there any such stories in the Bible? We cannot tell by theorizing, we must read the Bible and find out. We open the big book, and the very first page we read that God created the earth and the



heavens in six days, and then rested. That sounds like a story. It will not do to say that He created the world in six ages, for the word "day" does not mean age—it means a day of twenty-four hours. The Bible at the very beginning asserts that the heavens and the earth and man were all created inside of a week. We turn the page and we read of the creation of woman. The man falls asleep, God takes a rib from his side, and out of this rib creates a woman. That sounds like a story. In the third chapter we read of God walking in a garden in the cool of the day. A man and a woman have done wrong. They hide themselves. A snake has been talking to them. It all sounds like a story. If we should meet with it anywhere else, we should know it was a story. Why, then, if we find it in the Bible should we say that it is science or that it is history? Some one may say, "But would God use a story?" Indeed He would—at least He does.

Mothers are the great story-tellers of the world. They feed their children upon stories. . . . The story-telling power is built up in mothers in order to meet the story hunger in the child heart. Now all this is of God. And if God allows mothers to bring up their children on stories, I do not think He would hesitate to use stories Himself in the training of a world.

### THE NEW TESTAMENT NOT INTENDED TO BE A DIVINE ORACLE <sup>1</sup>

This apostolic inspiration did not put those whom it touched beyond the possibility of human fallibility. Paul at Antioch was obliged to rebuke Peter severely for a moral error. He himself carefully distinguishes between the eternal religious verity, the very commandments of Christ, and his own individual views. . . . Luke had certainly received the Spirit of God. But read again the prologue to his Gospel: does he speak otherwise than as

<sup>1</sup> By Auguste Sabatier. *Religions of Authority*. p. 168-9.

a good historian of his time, who has carried on a process of research and criticism in order to give a more full and accurate account than those given by his predecessors? Is there a single one of these writers—save perhaps the author of the Apocalypse, faithful in this respect to the literary class in which he works—is there a single one, I ask, who did not write for the occasion, in view of the requirements of circumstances, or who presents his work as a divine writing, to be added to the canon of the Old Testament?

These writings, therefore, have no appearance of being the authorized publication of divine oracles; they appear as the spontaneous production of a great classic literature, born of a profound religious faith, of a powerful common inspiration, but in which the general unity does not exclude a diversity of genius, of thought, and of style, and in which are not lacking, side by side with beautiful thoughts and striking truths, imperfections of forms, errors of detail, traces of former prejudices, and long superannuated methods of exegesis and reasoning.

### THE OLD ARGUMENT FROM PROPHECY AND MIRACLES IS WORTHLESS<sup>1</sup>

If we take the Old Testament prophecies literally, it is clear that they were not fulfilled in the New, and the claims of Christianity are false. If we interpret them allegorically, it is still clear that they prove nothing, for there are no ancient texts that may not be thus adjusted to a later history.

The argument from miracles is even less weighty. Supposing them to be true, they prove nothing, for a healthy reason would simply believe itself to be in the presence of phenomena whose causes it fails to grasp. How shall a positive demonstration be drawn from an avowal of ignorance? Is it not easier to make the con-

<sup>1</sup> By Auguste Sabatier. *Religions of Authority*. p. 201.

science accept the moral teachings of Christ than to convince the reason of the reality of miracles and of His corporeal resurrection?

## INFALLIBLE AUTHORITY IN PROTESTANTISM IS ILLOGICAL <sup>1</sup>

The Protestant dogma of authority never had, nor could have, the simplicity, the plenitude, the efficacy of the Catholic dogma. For Protestantism to undertake to constitute such a dogma is a pure inconsistency. The Protestant churches do not believe themselves infallible; how, then, can they constitute an infallible canon of sacred books, or borrow such a canon without the slightest criticism from the tradition of another church, a thousand times convicted of error?

## THE BIBLE VALUABLE BUT NOT PERFECT <sup>2</sup>

What, then, is Scripture, and what honour belongs to it? In truth a very great honour. It is not the mistress of true Christianity, but it is its servant. The servant need not be perfect; it suffices that she be faithful. Scripture is the fixation on paper of the evident Christian tradition; but because it is the earliest it is also the surest, and as the document most worthy of faith of all that we possess, forever commands the respect of all those who, like the Reformers, desire to go to the fountain-head and learn the authentic gospel from Christ and His apostles.

Yet this earliest tradition, taken as a whole, is not more secure than others from error, forgetfulness, imperfections, and additions. If it contains gold and silver, said Luther, it has also its hay and stubble. This is why it is ever subject to the criticism both of the

<sup>1</sup> By Auguste Sabatier. *Religions of Authority*. p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> By Auguste Sabatier. *Religions of Authority*. p. 162.

Christian consciousness and of science. Far from excluding necessary criticism, the original principle of Protestantism requires and inaugurates it.

## WE MUST NOT DEPEND ON AUTHORITY IN RELIGION<sup>1</sup>

Obviously, the point where this progressive conception of Christianity comes into conflict with many widely accepted ideas is the abandonment which it involves of an external and inerrant authority in matters of religion. The marvel is that that idea of authority, which is one of the historic curses of religion, should be regarded by so many as one of the vital necessities of the faith. The fact is that religion by its very nature is one of the realms to which external authority is least applicable. In science people commonly suppose that they do not take truth on any one's authority; they prove it. In business they do not accept methods on authority; they work them out. In statesmanship they no longer believe in the divine right of kings nor do they accept infallible dicta handed down from above. But they think that religion is delivered to them by authority and that they believe what they do believe because a divine church or a divine book or a divine man told them.

In this common mode of thinking, popular ideas have the truth turned upside down. The fact is that science, not religion, is the realm where most of all we use external authority. They tell us that there are millions of solar systems scattered through the fields of space. Is that true? How do we know? We never counted them. We know only what the authorities say. They tell us that the next great problem in science is breaking up the atom to discover the incalculable resources of power there waiting to be harnessed by our skill. Is that

<sup>1</sup> By Harry Emerson Fosdick. *Christianity and Progress*. p. 157-65. Copyright (1922), Fleming H. Revell & Co. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

true? Most of us do not understand what an atom is, and what it means to break one up passes the farthest reach of our imaginations; all we know is what the authorities say. They tell us that electricity is a mode of motion in ether. Is that true? Most of us have no first-hand knowledge about electricity. The motor-man calls it "juice" and that means as much to us as to call it a mode of motion in ether; we must rely on the authorities. They tell us that sometime we are going to talk through wireless telephones across thousands of miles, so that no man need ever be out of vocal communication with his family and friends. Is that true? It seems to us an incredible miracle, but we suppose that it is so, as the authorities say. In a word, the idea that we do not use authority in science is absurd. Science is precisely the place where nine hundred and ninety-nine men out of a thousand use authority the most. The chemistry, biology, geology, astronomy which the authorities teach is the only science which most of us possess.

There is another realm, however, where we never think of taking such an attitude. They tell us that friendship is beautiful. Is that true? Would we ever think of saying that we do not know, ourselves, but that we rely on the authorities? Far better to say that our experience with friendship has been unhappy and that we personally question its utility! That, at least, would have an accent of personal, original experience in it. For here we are facing a realm where we never can enter at all until we enter, each man for himself.

Two realms exist, therefore, in each of which first-hand experience is desirable, but in only one of which it is absolutely indispensable. We can live on what the authorities in physics say, but there are no proxies for the soul. Love, friendship, delight in music and in nature, parental affection—these things are like eating and breathing; no one can do them for us; we must enter the experience for ourselves. Religion, too, belongs in this



last realm. The one vital thing in religion is first-hand, personal experience. Religion is the most intimate, inward, incommunicable fellowship of the human soul. In the words of Plotinus, religion is "the flight of the alone to the Alone." You never know God at all until you know Him for yourself. The only God you ever will know is the God you do know for yourself.

This does not mean, of course, that there are no authorities in religion. There are authorities in everything, but the function of an authority in religion, as in every other vital realm, is not to take the place of our eyes, seeing in our stead and inerrantly declaring to us what it sees; the function of an authority is to bring to us the insight of the world's accumulated wisdom and the revelations of God's seers, and so to open our eyes that we may see, each man for himself. . . . That is the only use of authority in a vital realm. It can lead us up to the threshold of a great experience where we must enter, each man for himself, and that service to the spiritual life is the Bible's inestimable gift. . . .

If, however, Christianity is thus a life, we cannot stereotype its expressions in set and final forms. If it is a life in fellowship with the living God, it will think new thoughts, build new organizations, expand into new symbolic expressions. We cannot at any given time write "finis" after its development. We can no more "keep the faith" by stopping its growth than we can keep a son by insisting on his being forever a child. . . . He who believes in the living God, while he will be far from calling all change progress, and while he will, according to his judgment, withstand perverse changes with all his might, will also regard the cessation of change as the greatest calamity that could befall religion. Stagnation in thought or enterprise means death for Christianity as certainly as it does for any other vital movement. Stagnation, not change, is Christianity's most deadly enemy, for this is a progressive world, and in a

progressive world no doom is more certain than that which awaits whatever is belated, obscurantist and reactionary.

## CHRISTIANITY AND THE NEW LIGHT<sup>1</sup>

There are many people who seem to think that all the changes which are now palpably passing over the religious belief, not only of scholars and students but of ordinary religious people, are changes for the worse. They may perhaps be inevitable, they may be forced upon us by loyalty to truth, but, it is assumed, they cannot possibly represent, from a moral and spiritual point of view, any improvement upon the theories of the universe which are being discarded. They cannot possibly constitute a spiritual gain. The most that the modern theologian or apologist can do is to prevent the new truth doing any particular harm. Old ideas are given up regretfully and half-heartedly and the religious man tries to console himself with the reflection that after all enough is left of the old truth to enable people to lead decent lives and go to heaven when they die, although the church can hardly hope nowadays to produce such saints as were produced before the days when modern science and research had begun to limit the number and the burdensomeness of the beliefs which used to be considered necessary to salvation.

## HIGHER SPIRITUAL IDEAS

It seems to me that this attitude is a very great mistake. I believe that modern science and historical study have given us, not only truer but higher and more spiritually helpful ideas about human life than the beliefs which are being outlived. And not only so, but the new truth, so far from overshadowing or supplanting what

<sup>1</sup> By the late H. Hastings Rashdall, Dean of Carlisle. *Christian Century*. 40: 235-7. February 22, 1923.

was really valuable in the traditions of the past, has been the means of helping us to understand and appreciate better than ever before that great central revelation which God has once for all made of Himself in our Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot assume, indeed, that every new truth must represent from a moral and spiritual point of view an improvement upon the old. It is a quite irrelevant objection to the teaching of newly discovered facts or truths to urge that they are not edifying. We have got to recognize the facts whether we think them edifying or not. It is dishonest not to do so. But very often they are truths which from a strictly moral or religious point of view make simply no difference. I do not know that there is any great religious gain in believing that the earth goes round the sun instead of believing, as men used to do, that the sun goes round the earth; or in believing that the world took millions of years to make, instead of six days; or that men grew out of monkeys, instead of being the descendants of a specially created first man. But it is never right to refuse to listen to new views because they do not seem more edifying than the old ones, or even because they may on the face of them seem to be less edifying. It is a duty to pursue and make known the truth, whether we like it or not. But in point of fact I am fully persuaded that many of the changes which have in the course of the last century or so passed over human thought do not merely represent an advance from the point of view of science and of history, but tend to give us higher and nobler ideas about God, about Christ, about the meaning and purpose of human life than those which they have superseded.

Beyond all doubt the greatest change which has taken place in the religious outlook of Christian people during the last century has been a change in their attitude toward the Bible, especially toward the Old Testament. It used to be believed both by learned men and by average Christians that the whole Bible was absolutely and literally true—in matters of science, in matters of his-

tory, and in matters of religion and morality—equally true in all its parts. Now just consider to what a view of God's nature that committed people. It implied that God revealed Himself exclusively to one favorite nation—loved that nation and cared little or not at all for the rest of humanity. There are parts of the Old Testament which seem to suggest that the heathen were created for no other purpose than that they shall ultimately be destroyed, and so increase the triumph of the favored people of God. That old theory implied that God issued a number of arbitrary injunctions about sacrifices and foods and ritual observances of various kinds, and announced the most appalling punishments for the violation of these injunctions. Sabbath breaking, for instance, was by the old Jewish law punished with death. So was the imaginary offense of witchcraft. Moreover, the old view assumed that God from time to time commanded the Israelites to do all sorts of unrighteous and cruel acts: to borrow jewelry from the Egyptians without any intention of restoring it, to massacre the inhabitants of the country which without any pretense of right or justice they were invading, and the like. The God of the Israelites was thought of, like the gods of the heathen, as delighting in the smell of sacrifice and offerings, and requiring such things as the condition of his favor, and as a God who always fought on the side of his favorite nation, whether they were right or wrong. If ever he turned against them it was as a punishment for their disloyalty to Himself, not out of justice to their enemies.

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

So long as these Old Testament writings were thought of, not as a record of the religious ideas entertained by a primitive people on its way to a higher religion, not as a stage in the gradual self-revelation of God to the human mind, but as containing the actual words of direct divine communications made from time to time by some mechan-

ically supernatural method, so long it was utterly impossible for man fully to appreciate the higher truth which God revealed to the great prophets of the eighth and following centuries before Christ. How utterly hopeless it is to reconcile such ideas of God as are implied in parts of the pentateuchal law with such teachings as we find in Isaiah about a God who delights not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs or of he-goats, to whom incense and the observances connected with the Sabbath and the new moon are an abomination; or with the teaching implied in Micah's question: "Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousand rivers of oil? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

#### LAW AND PROPHETS

One of the most beneficent results of the better study and appreciation of the Old Testament during the last century or so has been completely to reverse the old conception as to the relative importance of the law and the prophets. It has shown us that, if we want to see the Jewish religion at its highest, we must look, not so much to the law as to the prophets, and that we must not seek to reconcile the higher and more ethical religion of the prophets with the religion of the priests, which, though the actual formulation of it in our present Pentateuch is for the most part later than the days of the exile, represents for the most part an earlier stage in the development of religion. We are now able to appreciate the religion of the Jewish prophets as it was quite impossible to do when they were regarded as simply on a level with the compilers of the legal books. Some qualifications would have to be made if we were to go into detail. Much of the higher prophetic teaching has found its way into the Pentateuch, particularly its stern monotheism, its horror of idolatry, its clear and definite for-



mulation of elementary moral rules. On the other hand, the prophets were not all of them entirely emancipated from the limitations and imperfections of the priestly religion. But, broadly speaking, in the law you find those features of Israel's religion which were more or less common to the religions of the ancient world. It is in the prophets that you find the really distinctive and characteristic features of Israel's religion, the features which raise it to a higher level than all other religions of the ancient world and which make it more definitely than any other the preparation for that full and complete revelation which God has made of Himself in our Lord Jesus Christ.

### THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

And still more the idea of an infallible and equally inspired Bible made it impossible for men to appreciate the superiority of our Lord's own teaching even to the highest teaching of the Old Testament. It was impossible to do justice to Christ's great conception of God as the common Father and Lover of mankind, so long as it was supposed that up to the date of Christ's coming God really had a favorite nation—not, as St. Paul taught, a nation entrusted with a particular mission for the eventual good of the whole world, but a nation loved by a God who hated other nations. It was impossible to appreciate the Christian idea of God as pure love, so long as it was supposed that He had not merely permitted as part of His general plan for the education of the world, but expressly and by supernatural interposition enjoined all the atrocities of the Old Testament. It was impossible to appreciate Christ's idea of God as always willing to forgive sin upon the one condition of true repentance so long as it was supposed that at one time He had really required and insisted upon all the sacrifices and offerings prescribed by Jewish law.

When we look back upon the enormous spiritual gain of these results of modern scholarship I feel inclined to

say exultantly and thankfully that in no age of the world since the very earliest days of Christianity has there been a more signal, perhaps so signal, a fulfilment of the Johannine promise that when the spirit of truth shall come He will guide Christ's disciples into all truth. So much has modern study helped us to understand the religion of Christ that one sometimes feels inclined to say that the church has never really understood before that emancipation of Christianity from the restrictions and limitations of Judaism which was begun by St. Paul but which has hardly been completed yet. The church has always been slipping back into the old realism from which, as St. Paul taught, Christ came to set us free—either seeking to reimpose features of the old legal system or inventing fresh legalisms, inventing fresh fastings, penances, expiations, exclusive priesthoods, burdensome external ordinances of one kind or another which are equally opposed to the glorious liberty of the Christian religion.

#### NOT AN EASY RELIGION

But let us not for one moment suppose that this better understanding of the Christian religion has made it an easier religion than once it seemed. From the point of view of ceremonial observances, our Lord could exclaim, "My yoke is easy and My burden is light." But we must remember that He taught also that except the righteousness of His disciples exceeded the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, they should in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. In spite of all the intellectual limitations and perplexities which beset the Christian thought of the past, there have been saints in all ages who really have entered into the inmost spirit of the Christian religion and practised what they understood of it. But when we think of the average practise of the religious world, especially the religious world of rich or comfortable people, we are inclined to say that, little as Christianity has been understood in the past,

still less has it been practised. When we compare the standard of devotion to the common good which Christ demands with the attitude toward the pursuit and enjoyment of wealth which has been adopted by conventional religious circles, one does feel tempted to say it is a mistake to say that Christianity has failed, because it has never been tried. But it is better not to say that. That is, after all, really a foolish and superficial thing to say. If Christianity had not been tried in the past, it is not very likely that it will get a better trial now.

It seems to me that such remarks do gross injustice to the past history of the Christian church—its martyrs, its heroes, its confessors, and the masses of quiet religious-minded people who have really striven to realize Christ's ideal of unselfish devotion to the good of their fellows—none the less so that many of them may have intellectually believed some things which were really inconsistent with that ideal. Ideals are none the less true even though on any great and wide social scale they have never been fully realized. Such realization of the Christian ideal as there has been in the past is none the less the noblest chapter of human history because at its best it has been imperfect, marred by the intellectual limitations as well as the moral infirmities of human beings. The best Christians in all ages have largely risen above the intellectual mistakes of their theoretical creeds. Many of those who have put forward theories of God's dealings with men which seem to involve the most unworthy and inadequate conceptions of Him have in their lives shown how completely they have understood the central Christian doctrine that God is love. Let us recognize that our better intellectual apprehension of what Christianity is only increases our obligation to tread in their footsteps. Never let us imagine for one moment that our freedom from the mistakes and misapprehensions of the past is going to make Christianity an easier and less exacting religion than it was to those who first heard

the words: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for strait is the way and narrow is the gate that leadeth unto life." Only then the straitness of the gate and the narrowness of the way are for us due to the needs and necessities of our fellow men and the self-denial and self-sacrifice that is necessarily involved in serving them.

## GREAT GAINS FROM THE NEW VIEW<sup>1</sup>

For one thing, it is no small matter that we can now feel reasonably **certain of** what the New Testament is, and what it is meant to teach us. In old days enquiry was forbidden. The book was simply thrust upon Christian men, and a merit was made of their accepting everything in it without doubt or question. Such a demand was always felt to be unjust, and in this age, when everything else is subjected to the freest enquiry, it was becoming more and more dangerous. . . . Criticism, whatever else it has done, has enabled us to get behind legends and conjectures and lay hold of facts. The facts may seem poorer than the imaginations, but at any rate they *are* facts. We know at last what our religion is based on; faith has found a real starting-point.

But again, the effort to reach the facts has not impoverished the New Testament, or the religion to which it witnesses. To be sure we are now obliged to recognize the human limitations of the book. We can see that doctrines which were once supposed to embody the absolute truth were mixed up with much that was transient and mistaken. But all enquiry has served to deepen our reverence for the book as an expression of religion. We have been made to realize that the writers were seeking to define, in terms however inadequate, things which they intensely felt, and which, in their inmost meaning, must stand forever. Because it thus takes us so close to the

<sup>1</sup> By E. F. Scott, professor in Union Theological Seminary, New York. *The New Testament Today*. p. 87-92. Copyright (1921), The Macmillan Co. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

realities of religion the New Testament has more to give us than if it was an infallible guide to doctrine. We enter by means of it into communion with great seekers after God. Our very sense that they could only half express themselves arouses us to a personal effort of faith and sympathy, so that we may reach through the letter to the living conviction that was in their minds. The modern enquiry has indeed made us more than ever doubtful of the traditional forms of Christianity, from which, in any case, the age had broken away. But it has brought us a far clearer insight into their inner significance. We feel again, as men felt in the primitive age, that what Christ gave was not a creed or a system but a regenerating spirit.

. . . Above all, the figure of Jesus Himself stands out all the more grandly as the mists of theological speculation are blown away from Him, and we come to discern Him as He really sojourned on earth. It is not too much to say that by recovering for us the historic life of Jesus criticism has brought Christianity back to the true source of its power. The creeds, whatever may have been their value formerly, have broken down, but Jesus as we know Him in His life, and all the more as the life is freed from accretions of legend, still commands the world's reverence and devotion. The theology of the future, it is not rash to prophesy, will start from the interpretation of Jesus as a man in history.

Finally, the modern enquiry has made it possible for us to think of Christianity as a living revelation. According to the old view the mind of the Spirit was communicated once for all in the New Testament, so that henceforth the church had no other duty than to guard the deposit of truth. This assumption, more than anything else, has weighed like a burden on Christianity. Ever and again great enterprises for human welfare have been arrested, because the New Testament said nothing of them, or seemed to discountenance them. Advances in



knowledge have been condemned because they lay beyond the horizon of New Testament thought. It is one of the ironies of history that the names of the great pioneers and liberators have always been used, in a later age, as watch-words of reaction; and this perversion has never been so manifest as in the case of the New Testament. It owed its very existence to an impulse of progress. As they encountered ever new conditions the missionaries sought to bring their Gospel into harmony with them. The aid of Greek speculation was called in to interpret the work of Jesus to the Gentiles; the demands He had laid down were applied in new directions to meet the difficulties which could not present themselves in Galilee or Jerusalem. No forward movement has ever been so bold and rapid as that which transformed a little Jewish sect into the church of a great empire, made up of diverse races which had been nurtured in heathenism. It is surely illogical to acclaim the New Testament writers as the men who understood Christianity best, and in the same breath to denounce the very principles they worked on. . . . The modern enquiry has rendered the church a vital service by impressing on it that the faith which cramps itself within a fixed tradition is not the faith of the New Testament. Christianity, as we know it from the earliest records, kept pace with the movement of life. It was at once the truth proclaimed by Jesus and the truth which unfolded itself through the operation of His living spirit. More than once in the course of its history our religion has been saved by a return to the New Testament, and this, we may dare to anticipate, will happen again. The ancient book, which seemed to bind us to an outworn past, has become our charter of liberty. We are loyal to it most when we answer its call to go forward, and to re-fashion its teaching by the larger light of this new time.



Part III

SCIENCE AND RELIGION;  
EVOLUTION AND THE BIBLE



## A. THE ARGUMENT AGAINST EVOLUTION

### WHAT ABOUT EVOLUTION? SOME THOUGHTS ON THE RELATION OF EVOLUTION TO THE BIBLE AND CHRISTIANITY<sup>1</sup>

It is sometimes said that Christianity has suffered much from not accepting the modern scientific doctrine of evolution. Do those who speak in this way really know what evolution means? Could they define it? Could they tell in what way it has been modified since the time of Darwin? There is no little ignorance on the subject, and it is worth while to consider what is to be understood by the term.

A statement recently reported as made by an American clergyman represents the views of many on evolution: "There is no escape for intelligent people today from the acceptance of the law of evolution. This law may be stated briefly to be that life on this planet, including man, has developed from the lower to higher types. Thus, man has gradually developed from some lower form of animal life. And man in his highest estate has through infinite years developed from man in his savage state." It is clear from such an utterance that this minister has accepted the idea of evolution without giving it that careful attention which is necessary in the case of so vital and important a question. It is an illustration of how easy it is to accept a position which happens to be current, without subjecting it to proper examination.

<sup>1</sup> By W. H. Griffith Thomas, D.D., Wycliffe College, Toronto. Copyright (1918), The Bible Institute Colportage Association, Chicago, Illinois. Reprinted by permission.



Evolution may mean little or a great deal. The term is often misused. Sometimes it is employed quite generally to indicate a change brought about by some force, whether internal or external. But the strictly scientific meaning is, a change wrought by internal force without external aid or volition. It would be well if this strictly correct meaning could always be understood by the use of the term.

The ordinary reader need have no difficulty in understanding that it is usual to divide the subject into sub-organic, organic, and super-organic. The first refers to the development of *matter without life*, and is applied to the formation of the solar system from some cruder conditions of matter. Organic evolution is intended to describe a process of derivation or development of vegetable and animal life. Super-organic evolution refers to the same principle in metaphysical and non-material spheres.

### ORGANIC EVOLUTION

But let us now think simply of organic evolution. Even here, there is scarcely anything that needs more careful definition because of the wide divergence of opinion as to the use of the term. It is sometimes applied to the ordinary growth of a vegetable from a seed, or of a chicken from an egg. It is also used to denote a gradual development, made without any outside interference, but by means of residential forces, of some primordial germ into all the varied forms of life now existent. Further, it is sometimes thought of as causal, that is, as the cause of all life; and sometimes as modal, that is, as the method by which a personal Creator has brought about the varied forms of life. The latter is, of course, the only possible way of using the term in a Theistic and Christian sense.

But now comes the question as to evolution's real meaning as a method of the Creator's work. According to Huxley, life originated in a low form of matter, which

passed into higher forms by a constant succession of transmutations of species, until at length mankind was reached. On this hypothesis it is necessary to ask whether all life sprang from one cell, or from two, one for vegetable and one for animal? And if two, why not more? This question has to be settled by evidence. The earliest vegetable form known is that of the algæ or sea-weeds, and yet during vast ages that species has remained essentially unchanged and abounds today in the same form. In commenting on this fact, Albert L. Gridley, in the chapter on modal evolution in his book, *Genesis the Foundation for Science and Religion*, keenly asks: "If some algæ parents begat algæ offspring, so to speak, and have continued to do so throughout the ages, is it probable that other algæ parents begat offspring of some other species and these begat other species still, and so the thousands of fossil and living plants have been produced?"

#### TRANSMUTATION OF SPECIES

But the curious thing is that, in spite of all the scientific research and discussion, there is *no proof whatever of anything like a change or transmutation of species*. Species today are practically what they have been for ages; there is no trace of one ever crossing over to another. Dr. Etheridge, the superintendent of the Department of Natural History in the British Museum, has declared; "In all this great museum there is not a particle of evidence of transmutation of species. Nine-tenths of the talk of evolutionists is sheer nonsense, not founded on observation and wholly unsupported by fact. They adopt a theory and then strain their facts to support it." To the same effect are the words of De Cyon, the Russian scientist, in his book *God and Science*, who says: "Evolution is pure assumption."

It is to be noted, also, that while regular, orderly progress is necessary to any theory of evolution, it is no evi-

dence of even modal evolution, nor of a development from within of any kind. This is quite as true in a natural history museum as it is in an automobile show. Skeletons of creatures from the lowest monkey to the highest type of man himself may be arranged in exact order. So may automobiles, from the first rude and crude and grotesque models of twenty years ago to the most artistic landaulet of today. But there is no modal evolution here: no germ in one automobile has produced the next better by forces *within*, through natural selection, in any sense whatever. There has been nothing more than a suggestion of some change that might be made for the better, and this suggestion was in a *mind without*, and the change came wholly from that *mind without*, and through a new creative act.

Some time ago an article appeared on "The Evolution of the Jackknife," and reference was made to the development from the rudest flint to the latest steel blade, but a moment's thought should have prevented the use of the term "evolution," because it is obvious that the flint did not produce another and higher type and so on stage by stage up to the steel knife. All the "evolution" was in the mind of man. To the same effect is the inaccurate phrase, "the evolution of the English Bible." Such orderly progress proves no more than this: each step in the progress may have come about only through a suggestion in a *mind without*, and been produced by a creative act *from without*.

#### MODIFICATION OF DARWINISM

It is well known that the theory of evolution as put forth by Darwin has become seriously, even profoundly, modified by more recent research. One of the ablest evolutionists today is Professor Henslow, formerly president of the British Association, and in his book, *Modern Rationalism Critically Examined*, he shows that Darwinian natural selection is absolutely inadequate to account for

existing facts, and that the additional principle of directivity must be adduced. Those who wish to see how remarkable has been the change in the views of scientific men on evolution should read *Naturalism and Religion* by Otto, which is available in an English translation; or else the treatment of the subject in *God's Image in Man* by Dr. James Orr. Professor Bateson, who gave the Presidential Address at the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, in 1914, bore striking testimony to the modifications made by recent science in connection with the Darwinian theory. This is what he said among other things: "The principle of natural selection cannot have been the chief factor in delimiting the species of animals and plants. We go to Darwin for his incomparable collection of facts. We would fain emulate his scholarship, his width and his power of exposition, but to us he speaks no more with philosophical authority. We have done with the notion that Darwin came latterly to favor, that large differences can arise by accumulation of small differences."

### QUESTIONS FOR EVOLUTIONISTS

Those who are inclined without due knowledge of the facts of the case to accept what they call the modern doctrine of evolution may be asked to answer these questions:

(1) How is it that life has never yet been produced from that which is non-living? Professor Tyndall, twenty-five years ago, said that in dead matter there is the promise and potency of life, and people actually believed it. But there was not an atom of truth in it, for in dead matter there is the promise and potency of decomposition, putrefaction, and disintegration. And now science, as represented by the president of the British Association, is foremost in acknowledging that there never has been any spontaneous generation. This gulf between the liv-

ing and the non-living must be spanned before evolution can be anything more than a hypothesis.

(2) How is it that embryonic, immature life has no power to reproduce itself? Eggs never hatch eggs; apples never bear apples. Immature life is absolutely unreprouductive, and there is no reproduction without maturity.

(3) How is it that embryonic life is also unimprovable? You cannot improve the embryo by working on it. We can only improve the quality of eggs by making a better quality of hen. To try to improve any kind of embryonic life is to endanger its existence.

(4) How is it that embryonic, immature life is also incapable of preservation? Almost anything will crush it out of existence. A scientist not long ago admitted that if embryonic life had come into the earth's chaotic state, it certainly would have been destroyed. If these things are true of embryonic life today, what evidence have we that they were not always true? And in this case, how could evolution from embryonic life have begun?

(5) How is it that Darwin's doctrine of natural selection still remains only a hypothesis and has never been absolutely established? There are two or three million of species on earth, and, according to Dr. N. S. Shaler, Professor of Geology, Harvard, it has not yet been proved that a single species has been established solely or even mainly by the operation of natural selection. Even Darwin himself said: "We cannot prove that a single species has changed" (Life and Letters. Vol. III, p 25). And Professor Huxley wrote: "Our acceptance of the Darwinian hypothesis must be provisional so long as one link in the chain of evidence is wanting." Professor Fleischmann, of Erlangen, has gone as far as to say that "the Darwinian theory of descent has, in the realms of nature, not a single fact to confirm it." Now in view of all the years and centuries which have been known, it is at least curious that not a trace of natural selection can be found.



It would seem as though the strong criticism of Professor Henslow in the book referred to above is right.

(6) How is it that evolution fails to explain man's appearance on the earth? Whatever date may be assigned to this, there is a gap between the highest animal and man which has never yet been accounted for by evolution. The fact that scientific opinion as to the age of the human race is in such pronounced disagreement seems to suggest that, at any rate, up to the present, there is no reliable evidence on which to form a definite opinion. Human remains and relics have not yet yielded any conclusive testimony.

(7) On the theory of evolution how is the sterilization of hybrids to be explained? The fact that both animals and plants come to a sudden stop and do not produce offspring under certain circumstances is a scientific fact that calls for thorough explanation, and on the theory of a gradual evolution there is no reason why this stop should ever come.

All this and much more that could be cited suggests the importance and necessity of clearness in regard to evolution. Those who are enamoured of everything modern and want to be "up-to-date" should really give full attention to the facts in the case, and think out their position without too hastily adopting the last view of modern thought.

#### EVOLUTION AND MATERIALISM

And it is well for those who think the church has been unduly suspicious of the theory of evolution and very slow in using it, to be reminded that there is ample ground for the suspicion. Evolution was proclaimed to the world, not merely as a scientific theory, but as an ally of a philosophy which, by its materialism, boasted that it would be capable of driving Christianity out of existence. Surely the church could hardly be expected to welcome a theory which was put forth under these

auspices ; and it is not surprising that the memory of this early time abides. People in the present day hardly realize the exultation with which the doctrine of evolution was hailed as the explanation of the universe and as a supreme proof of human knowledge and inquiry. It seemed to settle everything, for it was thought by many to be the solution of all the problems of life.

That this is not an incorrect, still less a biased statement, may be seen from the words of Professor Henry Fairfield Osborn in his recent book, *The Origin and Evolution of Life*, where he says :

In truth, from the period of the earliest stages of Greek thought man has been eager to discover some natural cause of evolution, and to abandon the idea of supernatural intervention in the order of nature.

But it was not long before men of science, as well as men in the church, found that evolution did not yield the desired and expected results, and when a scientist, like Huxley, endeavored to explain the universe in the light of this principle he was compelled to settle down into agnosticism, while Herbert Spencer went further by saying, not only that he did not know, but illogically maintaining that it was impossible to know. And now that, fifty years afterward, agnosticism is no longer the fashionable attitude of earlier days, the explanation of evolution is as far off as ever, because science realizes that the universe is infinitely more complex than it had formerly considered it to be. Here again the words of Professor Osborn may be adduced :

Between the appearance of *The Origin of Species* in 1859 and the present time, there have been great waves of faith in one explanation and then in another ; each of these waves of confidence has ended in disappointment, until finally we have reached a stage of very general scepticism. Thus the long period of observation, experiment and reasoning which began with the French philosopher, Buffon, one hundred and fifty years ago ends in 1916 with the general feeling that our search for causes, far from being near completion, has only just begun.

## EVOLUTION OPPOSED BY SCIENTISTS

But opposition to evolution was by no means confined to the church and based on religious reasons; men of high position in the scientific world were equally opposed to it on scientific grounds. No one can deny either the opposition or the knowledge of Virchow, the great pathologist, who spoke in the strongest terms against the view of man being evolved from the ape. Indeed, he said all real knowledge goes in an opposite direction and, as we shall presently see, there have been recent illustrations of this striking statement. Sir William Dawson, of Montreal, the eminent geologist, said that the evolution doctrine is one of the strangest phenomena of humanity, a system destitute of any shadow of proof (Story of the Earth and Man. p. 317.) Even Professor Tyndall in an article in the *Fortnightly Review* said:

There ought to be a clear distinction made between science in the state of hypothesis and science in the state of fact. And inasmuch as it is still in its hypothetical stage the ban of exclusion ought to fall upon the theory of evolution. I agree with Virchow that the proofs of it are still wanting, that the failures have been lamentable, that the doctrine is utterly discredited.

Many recent scientific statements in support of this contention are available, but perhaps one will suffice, made by the well known German scientist, Haeckel. He is frank to admit that he stands almost alone, and then says "Most modern investigators of science have come to the conclusion that the doctrine of evolution, and particularly Darwinism, is an error and cannot be maintained."

## THEISTIC EVOLUTION

There are, it is true, men like Professor Drummond, Dr. McCosh, and many more who see no reason why, if the doctrine of evolution is proved, it should not be regarded as thoroughly in harmony with Theism and Christianity. But it must be confessed that this is in great

measure merely the retention of the name of evolution and an entirely new interpretation of it. If by "Theistic" evolution is meant God's way of working, it is, of course, absolutely true, but the question is whether this would be accepted by most of the scientists who teach the idea of evolution as the great principle of nature. Theism and evolution may be made correlative terms, but as a rule, they are regarded as contradictory, for evolution is generally so well defined that its fundamental idea is at least deistic, if not a-theistic, and to empty a word of its usual meaning and make it something different is at least confusing and is hardly likely to be generally adopted.

But even from this viewpoint of harmony with revelation, evolution should not be regarded at present as an assured result, but only as a working hypothesis of science. Those who are apt, on insufficient grounds, to rush to the conclusion that everything modern is right, and that most ancient things, especially in the Bible, are wrong should give themselves a little more study, both of the modern and the ancient facts of the case.

From time to time statements are heard to the effect that it is impossible to reconcile Genesis with science. Perhaps a little more knowledge of what Genesis actually contains, and a little more information about the real facts of science, might lead to another conclusion.

On one hypothesis there is no doubt that Genesis and evolution *are* irreconcilable, namely, the belief that evolution is *causal*, thereby ruling out a belief in a first cause. If we admit that the solar system has always existed, it would, of course, be necessary to believe in the eternity of matter. But nothing in the universe more clearly points to a beginning than the solar system; and great scientists, like Lord Kelvin and Sir Oliver Lodge, are quite definite in their conviction that only by means of a first cause can we account for things as they are. Even Herbert Spencer is compelled to speak of an infinite and unknowable

energy from which all things proceed, thereby admitting a first cause, and at the same time revealing his own inconsistency in asserting it to be "unknowable." Unknown to him, if he likes, but to say it is "unknowable" begs the question. Besides, it is no mere verbal juggling that shows the impossibility of agnosticism by asking, "How do you know that you do not know?" Whatever may be the precise method by which present arrangements have come to be, orderly succession suggests cause and effect, and this, in turn, implies and demands an intelligent and infinite first cause. So we may dismiss this idea of causal evolution, because it is plainly anti-theistic.

#### EVOLUTION AS A METHOD

The other view regards evolution as modal: that is, as the method employed by God to produce the world and all that is in it. On this assumption evolution cannot get farther back than the condition of things mentioned or implied in the second verse of Genesis, which has been likened to the well known nebular hypothesis. This assumes a mass of nebulous matter revolving with velocity and throwing off rings which form the planetary system. But even this is now being set aside by science for the new theory of the origin of matter through electrons. The modification of the nebular hypothesis, which is still being discussed by scientists, shows that until science can give a clear proof of the origin of matter, those who predicate a first cause as the only adequate explanation have still a good deal to say for themselves.

Science, on either view, does not explain in the slightest degree how these things came to be. For this we must go farther back still and concentrate attention on verse 1, which teaches that the universe was not self-originated, but was due to a first cause. Once this is granted, it can be seen that there is no contradiction between Genesis and science. No scientific error has yet been proved to exist in Genesis, and its language is sufficiently flexible to



allow of agreement with modern discoveries. If Genesis had been written in strict scientific language, it would have been unintelligible for centuries. Consider some of the points in which Genesis worthily illustrates the best modern knowledge.

### GENESIS AND SCIENCE

There is one word for the act of creation as distinct from that of making or moulding from materials, and it is significant that this word occurs three times only, and in connection with the three spheres of matter (Gen. 1: 1); of life (v: 21); and of man (v: 27). When it is remembered that Mr. Alfred Russell Wallace, who shared with Darwin the distinction of pioneer in the modern evolution theory, maintains that there must have been three interpositions of a divine and supernatural power to account for things as they now are, the agreement or at least the coincidence of science with Genesis is surely very striking. There is a gulf between matter and nothing; another between life and the non-living; and a third between man and the lower creation, and science cannot bridge any of them.

Then again the first chapter of Genesis has the same order of events, as may be seen in scientific records to-day. Comparative anatomy tells us that the types of life go up from the lowest to the highest, and are determined by the proportion of the amount of the brain to the spinal cord, the order being fish, reptiles, birds, mammals, man. This is exactly the order of Genesis. It would be interesting to know how the author of that chapter came to be familiar with facts which were only discovered by science just over two centuries ago.

Further, the chapter is clearly marked by indications of development, progress, and change in harmony with much modern teaching on evolution; and it has also points of contact with biological and anthropological

teaching about man's nature. Man is seen to be at once united with nature and yet separate from it. This unity of animate and inanimate nature is exactly in accordance with scientific thought. Even a materialistic scientist like Haeckel bears his testimony to this remarkable fact, and the late Professor Romanes and others speak in the warmest terms of the way in which Genesis has anticipated the order of events as recorded by science. Their very words are useful. Haeckel admits that "two great and fundamental ideas, common also to the non-miraculous, meet us in the Mosaic hypothesis of creation with surprising clearness and simplicity—the idea of separation or differentiation and the idea of progressive development or perfecting. . . . In this theory there lies hidden the ruling idea of a progressive development and differentiation of the originally simple matter. We can, therefore, bestow our just and sincere admiration of the Jewish law-giver's grand insight into nature" (quoted by McCosh, *The Religious Aspect of Evolution*. p. 99, 100). And Professor Romanes says that "the order in which the flora and fauna are said by the Mosaic account to have appeared upon the earth corresponds with that which the theory of evolution requires and the evidence of geology proves" (quoted in McCosh. p. 99).

It is, therefore, marvellous that, although, naturally, not setting down scientific truths in scientific phraseology, the writer of Genesis was prevented from setting down anything inconsistent with scientific results. The oldest book in the possession of man has wonderfully anticipated some of the latest discoveries of science. Of course, it is necessary to distinguish carefully between geology and Genesis, the one being for students and the other for all men; the one being concerned with science, the other with religion. And yet there are striking analogies between them, as, for example, the fact that the material universe had a beginning and is not eternal; that light was in existence before the appearance of the

sun and moon; that the earth was once covered with water; that vegetation preceded animal life; and that man only came when the earth was ready. It is also striking that many leading geologists, like Buckland, Miller, Dana, Dawson, Hitchcock, and others, have expressed the opinion that geology is in harmony with the account of creation in Genesis.

#### GENESIS AND ANTHROPOLOGY

In particular, the question of man is important as showing that there is no contradiction between Genesis and science. Anthropology, like Genesis, bears witness to man's complex nature, implying a complex origin. Physiology is not adequate to account for him; psychology must be predicated as well. The memory alone is a proof that both elements are required, physical and mental. The brain is at once physical and the seat of the faculty of recollection, and so, when the brain is injured, memory, too suffers. Yet no one can explain how the physical matter of the brain is connected with the non-physical element of memory. Then, too, as pointed out already, the origin of species by favorable variations is not the entire explanation, for, as Sir Oliver Lodge rightly asks, "How is the appearance of these favorable variations to be accounted for?" He goes on to say that it can only be by artificial selection. Given their appearance, their development can be explained; but that they arose spontaneously is an assumption which cannot be made. Here are the exact words of the great scientist: "Does anyone think that the skill of the beaver, the instinct of the bee, the genius of a man, arose by chance, and that its presence is accounted for by anything done and by survival? What struggle for existence will explain the advent of a Beethoven? What doubtful instinct for earning a living as a dramatist will educe for us a Shakespeare? These things are beyond science of the orthodox type. Then let us be silent, and let it deny

nothing in the universe until it has at least made an honest attempt to grasp the whole." (*Hibbert Journal*. Vol. I. p. 218).

How, also, are we to account by evolution for these things in man: (a) The fact of mind; (b) the fact of language; (c) the fact of conscience? Evolutionists may be safely challenged to explain any of these by the process of development. It is simply impossible to express personality in terms of evolution, for there are facts outside it, and also several gaps, which prevent it from being regarded as an inductive science.

### SCIENCE AND THE FALL

It is sometimes said that science has no trace of the fall. This is probably true in regard to physical science, because we have no right to expect it there. But there are other branches of science as well which call for equal consideration. Thus, there is the testimony of moral philosophy or, as it may be called, psychology. What are we to say of man's conscience which clearly testifies to the fundamental distinction between right and wrong? Nothing in evolution can explain conscience or say how man has come to a consciousness of guilt as the result of wrong-doing. If it be alleged that conscience has been developed by education, the answer is that many tribes of savages have more enlightened consciences than some educated and cultivated men. The savages show the work of law written on their hearts, and the idea of developing conscience from the lower animals is unthinkable and really absurd, for no one ever associates a conscience with a dog, a tiger or a shark.

Most important of all is the problem of Christ, with the absolute impossibility of accounting for Him by any theory of evolution. As we ponder His personal character of sinlessness, His claim to represent and express Deity, the element of the supernatural in His life, and, not least of all, His remarkable influence throughout the

ages, we fail to find any explanation in evolution. This means that on the assumption of a divine revelation or a divine incarnation, evolution becomes necessarily disproved.

### MAN AND THE APE

Two curious illustrations of the fluctuating state of scientific opinion have recently been given. At the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, held in New York city in December, 1916, the question of man's relationship to the ape was considered, with special reference to the question of "the missing link." A notable change of view was expressed, and the problem was raised whether the ape is related to man by ascent or descent. One of the most recent authoritative publications by a German anthropologist urges that "the apes are to be regarded as degenerate branches of the pre-human stock." This means in a word that "man is not descended from the ape, but the ape from the man." This is almost what may be called a *reductio ad absurdum*, and yet it is one of the latest pronouncements of scientific thought (Editorial in *New York Herald*. December 30, 1916).

To the same effect are the words of Professor Wood-Jones, Professor of Anatomy in the University of London, England, who recently pointed out that so far from man having descended from anthropoid apes, it would be more accurate to say that these have been descended from man. This was claimed not only by reason of the best anatomical research, but to be deducible from the whole trend of geological and anthropological discovery. On this account Professor Wood-Jones appealed for an entire reconsideration of the post-Darwinian conceptions of man's comparatively recent emergence from the brute kingdom, asserting that the missing link, if ever found, would not be a more ape-like man, but a more human ape,



## EVOLUTION AND CATASTROPHE

Another difficulty arises in connection with what is now known as evolution "by leaps." When the doctrine of evolution first became popular, it was thought to express a gradual, regular, and unbroken process in which the previous condition always accounted for the present condition. All suggestions of special creations, sudden breaks, and interruptions, and great changes were considered impossible. Yet it now appears that this earlier view is altogether inadequate, for evolution proceeds by "leaps" as well as by slow processes, and the well-known French writer, Bergson, is actually able to write these words: "Apart from the question to what extent the theory of evolution describes the facts and to what extent it symbolizes them, there is nothing in it that is irreconcilable with the doctrines it has aimed to replace, even with that of special creations, to which it is usually opposed" (*Creative Evolution*. p. 27, English edition).

No one can deny the facts of catastrophe, convulsion and irruption in nature, and certainly evolution is unable to set aside these realities. And so it is clear that science cannot explain creation; at best it can only describe a process. The initiative which produces variation is still a mystery to science, and whatever immanent movements there may be, the need of a transcendent factor is as great as ever.

From all this it is obvious that the theory of evolution is still a hypothesis which we have a perfect right to question until facts are forthcoming to transform the hypothesis into scientific truth.

## EVOLUTION CANNOT EXPLAIN

It is, therefore, high time that the whole truth be known in order that those who fear the authority of Genesis is destroyed may be reassured. Let it be remembered that evolution is not an explanation. It does not

say anything as to how the primal impulse arose from which the whole movement proceeds. It does not explain the upward tendency of things. It does not explain the particular forms and laws in the universe. It cannot bridge the gulf between mind and matter. All these have to be taken for granted at the start; and from the standpoint of evolution, agnosticism is the only position in regard to them, for they are unknown and apparently unknowable. They may be described, but cannot be accounted for. Evolution may attempt to describe; only Theism can explain.

It is well known that if any single cell of life, in plant, insect, or animal, cannot take in from without, the issue is death. There is no such thing as development merely from within, for development is also dependent on appropriation of force from without. If nothing is taken in from without, there is no development from within, and it is this that Genesis specifically teaches. The truth is that so many seem content to take evolution for granted, as though it were absolutely assured beyond all possibility of question. Yet those who take this line are, as already seen, opposed to some of the plainest scientific facts, and they can only be regarded as adopting the science at second-hand without proper inquiry.

Thus, in spite of all the brilliant discoveries of science, the plain fact abides that we must come back to the Old Book for an explanation of the origin of life. Let those, then, who have been perturbed by any utterance on this subject possess their souls in patience, and remember that not every statement found in the papers is necessarily true, especially when it has to do with religion. There is no need to apologize for the first chapter of Genesis, no need to be disconcerted when anyone declaims against it.

#### PRESENT CONCLUSIONS OF SCIENCE

This is how a scientist puts the case in a summary of the facts in five departments of knowledge as they are now known:

(1) Both matter and energy seem now to be at a standstill, so far as creation is concerned, no means being known to science whereby the fixed quantity of both with which we have to deal in this world can be increased (or diminished) in the slightest degree.

(2) The origin of life is veiled in a mist that science has not dispelled and does not hope to dispel. By none of the processes that we call natural can life now be produced from the not-living.

(3) Unicellular forms can come only from pre-existing cells of the same kind; and even the individual cells of a multicellular organism, when once differentiated, reproduce only other cells after their own kind.

(4) Species of plants and animals have wonderful powers of variation; but these variations seem to be regulated and predestined in accordance with definite laws, and in no instance known to science has this variation resulted in producing what could properly be called a distinct new kind of plant or animal.

(5) Geology has been supposed to prove that there has been a long succession of distinct types of life on the globe in a very definite order extending through vast ages of time. This is now known to be a mistake. Most living forms of plants and animals are found as fossils; but there is no possible way of telling that one kind of life lived and occupied the world before others, or that one kind of life is intrinsically older than any other or than the human race. (*Q.E.D.* by Professor G. M. Price. p. 125+.)

All this shows the force of some recent words spoken at a meeting of scientists in Philadelphia by Dr. T. H. Morgan, Professor of Science in Columbia University, who said that colleges have been spending too much time trying to teach evolution and added:

It is time to call a halt. We have been standing on a belief founded on comparative anatomy, and a belief not very well founded at that. The teacher has followed this method, because it is the easiest way to teach comparative anatomy. Be-

fore long the student will find out that we are giving him the same old stuff over and over again.

### MR. BRYAN ON EVOLUTION<sup>1</sup>

I appreciate your invitation to present the objections to Darwinism, or evolution applied to man, and beg to submit to your readers the following:

The only part of evolution in which any considerable interest is felt is evolution applied to man. A hypothesis in regard to the rocks and plant life does not affect the philosophy upon which one's life is built. Evolution applied to fish, birds and beasts would not materially affect man's view of his own responsibilities except as the acceptance of an unsupported hypothesis as to these would be used to support a similar hypothesis as to man. The evolution that is harmful—distinctly so—is the evolution that destroys man's family tree as taught by the Bible and makes him a descendant of the lower forms of life. This, as I shall try to show, is a very vital matter.

I deal with Darwinism because it is a definite hypothesis. In his "Descent of Man" and "Origin of Species" Darwin has presumed to outline a family tree that begins, according to his estimate, about two hundred million years ago with marine animals. He attempts to trace man's line of descent from this obscure beginning up through fish, reptile, bird and animal to man. He has us descend from European, rather than American, apes and locates our first ancestors in Africa. Then he says, "But why speculate?"—a very significant phrase because it applies to everything that he says. His entire discussion is speculation.

### DARWIN'S "LAWS"

Darwin set forth two (so-called) laws by which he attempts to explain the changes which he thought had

<sup>1</sup> From New York Times. Sunday, February 26, 1922.

taken place in the development of life from the earlier forms to man. One of these is called "natural selection" or "survival of the fittest," his argument being that a form of life which had any characteristic that was beneficial had a better chance of survival than a form of life that lacked that characteristic. The second law that he assumed to declare was called "sexual selection," by which he attempted to account for every change that was not accounted for by natural selection. Sexual selection has been laughed out of the class room. Even in his day Darwin said (see note to "Descent of Man" 1874 edition, page 625) that it aroused more criticism than anything else he had said, when he used sexual selection to explain how man became a hairless animal. Natural selection is being increasingly discarded by scientists. John Burroughs just before his death, registered a protest against it. But many evolutionists adhere to Darwin's *conclusions* while discarding his *explanations*. In other words, they accept the line of descent which he suggested *without any explanation whatever* to support it.

Other scientists accept the family tree which he outlined, but would have man branch off at a point below, or above, the development of apes and monkeys instead of coming through them. So far as I have been able to find, Darwin's line of descent has more supporters than any other outlined by evolutionists. If there is any other clearly defined family tree supported by a larger number of evolutionists, I shall be glad to have information about it that I may investigate it.

The first objection to Darwinism is that it is only a guess and was never anything more. It is called a "hypothesis," but the word "hypothesis," though euphonious, dignified and high-sounding, is merely a scientific synonym for the old-fashioned word "guess." If Darwin had advanced his views as a *guess* they would not have survived for a year, but they have floated for a half a century, buoyed up by the inflated word "hypothesis."



When it is understood that "hypothesis" means "guess," people will inspect it more carefully before accepting it.

### NO SUPPORT IN THE BIBLE

The second objection to Darwin's guess is that it has not one syllable in the Bible to support it. This ought to make Christians cautious about accepting it without thorough investigation. The Bible not only describes man's creation, but gives a reason for it; man is a part of God's plan and is placed on earth for a purpose. Both the Old and New Testament deal with man and with man only. They tell of God's creation of him, of God's dealings with him and of God's plans for him. Is it not strange that a Christian will accept Darwinism as a substitute for the Bible when the Bible not only does not support Darwin's hypothesis but directly and expressly contradicts it?

Third—Neither Darwin nor his supporters have been able to find a fact in the universe to support their hypothesis. With millions of species, the investigators have not been able to find *one single instance* in which one species has changed into another, although, according to the hypothesis, *all* species have developed from one or a few germs of life, the development being through the action of "resident forces" and without outside aid. Wherever a form of life, found in the rocks, is found among living organisms, there is no material change from the earliest form in which it is found. With millions of examples, nothing imperfect is found—nothing in the process of change. This statement may surprise those who have accepted evolution without investigation, as most of those who call themselves evolutionists have done. One preacher who wrote to me expressing great regret that I should dissent from Darwin said that he had not investigated the matter for himself, but that nearly all scientists seemed to accept Darwinism.

The latest word that we have on this subject comes

from Professor Bateson, a high English authority, who journeyed all the way from London to Toronto, Canada, to address the American Association for the Advancement of Science the 28th day of last December. His speech has been published in full in the January issue of *Science*.

Professor Bateson is an evolutionist, but he tells with real pathos how every effort to discover the origin of species has failed. He takes up different lines of investigation, commenced hopefully but ending in disappointment. He concludes by saying, "Let us then proclaim in precise and unmistakable language that our faith in evolution is unshaken," and then he adds, "our doubts are not as to the reality or truth of evolution, but as to the origin of species, a technical, almost domestic problem. Any day that mystery may be solved." Here is optimism at its maximum. They fall back on faith. They have not yet found the origin of species, and yet how can evolution explain life unless it can account for change in species? Is it not more rational to believe in creation of man by separate act of God than to believe in evolution without a particle of evidence?

Fourth—Darwinism is not only without foundation, but it compels its believers to resort to explanations that are more absurd than anything found in the "Arabian Nights." Darwin explains that man's mind became superior to woman's because, among our brute ancestors, the males fought for their females and thus strengthened their minds. If he had lived until now, he would not have felt it necessary to make so ridiculous an explanation, because woman's mind is not now believed to be inferior to man's.

#### AS TO HAIRLESS MEN

Darwin also explained that the hair disappeared from the body, permitting man to become a hairless animal because, among our brute ancestors, the females preferred

the males with the least hair and thus in the course of ages, bred the hair off. It is hardly necessary to point out that these explanations conflict; the males and the females could not both select at the same time.

Evolutionists, not being willing to accept the theory of creation, have to explain everything, and their courage in this respect is as great as their efforts are laughable. The eye, for instance, according to evolutionists, was brought out by "the light beating upon the skin;" the ears came out in response to "air waves;" the leg is the development of a wart that chanced to appear on the belly of an animal; and so the tommyrot runs on *ad infinitum* and sensible people are asked to swallow it.

Recently a college professor told an audience in Philadelphia that a baby wiggles its big toe without wiggling its other toes because its ancestors climbed trees; also that we dream of falling because our forefathers fell out of trees fifty thousand years ago, adding that we are not hurt in our dreams of falling because we descended from those that were *not killed*. (If we descended from animals at all, we certainly did not descend from those that were killed in falling). A professor in Illinois has fixed as the great day in history the day when a water puppy crawled upon the land and decided to stay there, thus becoming man's first progenitor. A dispatch from Paris recently announced that an eminent scientist had reported having communicated with the soul of a dog and learned that the dog was happy.

I simply mention these explanations to show what some people can believe who cannot believe the Bible. Evolution seems to close the heart of some to the plainest spiritual truths while it opens the mind to the wildest of guesses advanced in the name of science.

#### GUESSING IS NOT SCIENCE

Guesses are not science. Science is classified knowledge, and a scientist ought to be the last person to insist

upon a guess being accepted until proof removes it from the field of hypothesis into the field of demonstrated truth. Christianity has nothing to fear from any *truth*; no *fact* disturbs the Christian religion or the Christian. It is the unsupported *guess* that is substituted for science to which opposition is made, and I think the objection is a valid one.

But, it may be asked, why should one object to Darwinism *even though it is not true*? This is a proper question and deserves a candid answer. There are many guesses which are perfectly groundless and at the same time entirely harmless; and it is not worth while to worry about a guess or to disturb the guesser so long as his guess does not harm others.

The objection to Darwinism is that it is *harmful*, as well as groundless. It entirely changes one's view of life and undermines faith in the Bible. Evolution has no place for the miracle or the supernatural. It flatters the egotist to be told that there is nothing that his mind cannot understand. Evolution proposes to bring all the processes of nature within the comprehension of man by making it the explanation of everything that is known. Creation implies a Creator, and the finite mind cannot comprehend the infinite. We can understand some things, but we run across mystery at every point. Evolution attempts to solve the mystery of life by suggesting a process of development commencing "in the dawn of time" and continuing uninterrupted up until now. Evolution does not explain creation: it simply diverts attention from it by hiding it behind eons of time. If a man accepts Darwinism, or evolution applied to man, and is consistent, he rejects the miracle and the supernatural as impossible. He commences with the first chapter of Genesis and blots out the Bible story of man's creation, not because the evidence is insufficient, but because the miracle is inconsistent with evolution. If he is consistent, he will go through the Old Testament step by step and

cut out all the miracles and all the supernatural. He will then take up the New Testament and cut out all the supernatural—the virgin birth of Christ, His miracles and His resurrection, leaving the Bible a story book without binding authority upon the conscience of man. Of course, not all evolutionists are consistent; some fail to apply their hypothesis to the end just as some Christians fail to apply their Christianity to life.

### EVOLUTION AND GOD

Most of the evolutionists are materialists; some admitting that they are atheists, others calling themselves agnostics. Some call themselves "theistic evolutionists," but the theistic evolutionist puts God so far away that He ceases to be a present influence in the life. Canon Barnes of Westminster, some two years ago, interpreted evolution as to put God back of the time when the electrons came out of "stuff" and combined (about 1740 of them) to form an atom. Since then, according to Canon Barnes, things have been developing to God's plan but without God's aid.

It requires measureless credulity to enable one to believe that all that we see about us came by chance, by a series of happy-go-lucky accidents. If only an infinite God could have formed hydrogen and oxygen and united them in just the right proportions to produce water—the daily need of every living thing—scattered among the flowers all the colors of the rainbow and every variety of perfume, adjusted the mocking bird's throat to its musical scale, and fashioned a soul for man, why should we want to imprison God in an impenetrable past? This is a living world. Why not a living God upon the throne? Why not allow Him to work now?

Theistic evolutionists insist that they magnify God when they credit Him with devising evolution as a plan of development. They sometimes characterize the Bible God as a "carpenter god," who is described as repairing



His work from time to time at man's request. The question is not whether God could have made the world according to the plan of evolution—of course, an all-powerful God could make the world as He pleased. The real question is, Did God use evolution as His plan? If it could be shown that man, instead of being made in the image of God, is a development of beasts we would have to accept it, regardless of its effect, for truth is truth and must prevail. But when there is no proof we have a right to consider the effect of the acceptance of an unsupported hypothesis.

### DARWIN'S AGNOSTICISM

Darwinism made an agnostic out of Darwin. When he was a young man he believed in God; before he died he declared that the beginning of all things is a mystery insoluble by us. When he was a young man he believed in the Bible; just before his death he declared that he did not believe that there had ever been any revelation; that banished the Bible as the inspired Word of God, and, with it, the Christ of whom the Bible tells. When Darwin was young he believed in a future life; before he died he declared that each must decide the question for himself from vague, uncertain probabilities. He could not throw any light upon the great questions of life and immortality. He said that he "must be content to remain an agnostic."

And then he brought the most terrific indictment that I have read against his own hypothesis. He asks (just before his death): "Can the mind of man, which has, as I fully believe, been developed from a mind as low as that possessed by the lowest animal, be trusted when it draws such grand conclusions?" He brought man down to the brute level and then judged man's mind by brute standards.

This is Darwinism. This is Darwin's own testimony against himself. If Darwinism could make an ag-

nostic of Darwin, what is its effect likely to be upon students to whom Darwinism is taught at the very age when they are throwing off parental authority and becoming independent? Darwin's guess gives the student an excuse for rejecting the authority of God, an excuse that appeals to him more strongly at this age than at any other age in life. Many of them come back after a while as Romanes came back. After feeding upon husks for twenty-five years, he began to feel his way back, like a prodigal son, to his father's house, but many never return.

Professor Leuba, who teaches psychology at Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, wrote a book about six years ago entitled "Belief in God and Immortality" (it can be obtained from the Open Court Publishing Company, Chicago), in which he declared that belief in God and immortality is dying out among the educated classes. As proof of this he gave the results which he obtained by submitting questions to prominent scientists in the United States. He says that he found that more than half of them, according to their own answers, do not believe in a personal God or a personal immortality. To reinforce his position, he sent questions to students of nine representative colleges and found that unbelief increases from 15 per cent in the freshman year to 30 per cent in the junior class, and to 40 to 45 per cent (among the men) at graduation. This he attributes to the influence of the scholarly men under whose instruction they pass in college.

#### RELIGION WANING AMONG CHILDREN

Anyone desiring to verify these statistics can do so by inquiry at our leading state institutions and even among some of our religious denominational colleges. Fathers and mothers complain of their children losing their interest in religion and speaking lightly of the Bible. This begins when they come under the influence of a teacher

who accepts Darwin's guess, ridicules the Bible story of creation and instructs the child upon the basis of the brute theory. In Columbia a teacher began his course in geology by telling the children to lay aside all that they had learned in Sunday School. A teacher of philosophy in the University of Michigan tells students that Christianity is a state of mind and that there are only two books of literary value in the Bible. Another professor in that university tells students that no thinking man can believe in God or in the Bible. A teacher in the University of Wisconsin tells his students that the Bible is a collection of myths. Another state university professor diverts a dozen young men from the ministry and the president of a prominent state university tells his students in a lecture on religion to throw away religion if it does not harmonize with the teaching of biology, psychology, etc.

The effect of Darwinism is seen in the pulpits; men of prominent denominations deny the virgin birth of Christ and some even His resurrection. Two Presbyterians, preaching in New York state, recently told me that agnosticism was the natural attitude of old people. Evolution naturally leads to agnosticism. Those who teach Darwinism are undermining the faith of Christians; they are raising questions about the Bible as an authoritative source of truth; they are teaching materialistic views that rob the life of the young of spiritual values.

Christians do not object to freedom of speech; they believe that Biblical truth can hold its own in a fair field. They concede the right of ministers to pass from belief to agnosticism or atheism, but they contend that they should be honest enough to separate themselves from the ministry and not attempt to debase the religion which they profess.

And so in the matter of education. Christians do not dispute the right of any teacher to be agnostic or atheis-

tic, but Christians do deny the right of agnostics and atheists to use the public school as a forum for the teaching of their doctrines.

The Bible has in many places been excluded from the schools on the ground that religion should not be taught by those paid by public taxation. If this doctrine is sound, what right have the enemies of religion to teach irreligion in the public schools? If the Bible cannot be taught, why should Christian taxpayers permit the teaching of guesses that make the Bible a lie? A teacher might just as well write over the door of his room, "Leave Christianity behind you, all ye who enter here," as to ask his students to accept an hypothesis directly and irreconcilably antagonistic to the Bible.

Our opponents are not fair. When we find fault with the teaching of Darwin's unsupported hypothesis, they talk about Copernicus and Galileo and ask whether we shall exclude science and return to the dark ages. Their evasion is a confession of weakness. We do not ask for the exclusion of any scientific truth, but we do protest against an atheist teacher being allowed to blow his guesses in the face of the student. The Christians who want to teach religion in their schools furnish the money for denominational institutions. If atheists want to teach atheism, why do they not build their own schools and employ their own teachers? If a man really believes that he has brute blood in him, he can teach that to his children at home or he can send them to atheistic schools, where his children will not be in danger of losing their brute philosophy, but why should he be allowed to deal with other people's children as if they were little monkeys?

We stamp upon our coins "In God We Trust"; we administer to witnesses an oath in which God's name appears, our President takes his oath of office upon the Bible. Is it fanatical to suggest that public taxes should not be employed for the purpose of undermining the

nation's God? When we defend the Mosaic account of man's creation and contend that man has no brute blood in him, but was made in God's image by separate act and placed on earth to carry out a divine decree, we are defending the God of the Jews as well as the God of the Gentiles, the God of the Catholics as well as the God of the Protestants. We believe that faith in a Supreme Being is essential to civilization as well as to religion and that abandonment of God means ruin to the world and chaos to society.

Let these believers in "the tree man" come down out of the trees and meet the issue. Let them defend the teachings of agnosticism or theism if they dare. If they deny that the natural tendency of Darwinism is to lead many to a denial of God, let them frankly point out the portions of the Bible which they regard as consistent with Darwinism, or evolution applied to man. They weaken faith in God, discourage prayer, raise doubt as to a future life, reduce Christ to the stature of a man, and make the Bible a "scrap of paper." As religion is the only basis of morals, it is time for Christians to protect religion from its most insidious enemy.





## B. THE ARGUMENT FOR EVOLUTION

### SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT FOR EVOLUTION<sup>1</sup>

The nature of the proof of organic evolution, then is this: that using the concept of organic evolution as a working hypothesis it has been possible to rationalize and render intelligible a vast array of observed phenomena, the real facts upon which evolution rests. Thus classification (taxonomy), comparative anatomy, embryology, paleontology, zoogeography and phytogeography, serology, genetics, become consistent and orderly sciences when based upon evolutionary foundations, and when viewed in any other way they are thrown into the utmost confusion. There is no other generalization known to man which is of the least value in giving these bodies of facts any sort of scientific coherence and unity. In other words, the working hypothesis works and is, therefore, acceptable as truth until overthrown by a more workable hypothesis. Not only does the hypothesis work, but, with the steady accumulation of further facts, the weight of the evidence is now so great that it overcomes all intelligent opposition by its sheer mass.

### A SCIENTIST'S REPLY TO MR. BRYAN<sup>2</sup>

The last few years have witnessed a curious recrudescence of the old theological fight of fifty years ago against evolution. This movement is partly due to the

<sup>1</sup> By Professor H. H. Newman. Quoted by Gerald Birnie Smith. *Journal of Religion*. 2: 245-62. May, 1922. Can Christianity Welcome Freedom of Teaching?

<sup>2</sup> By Edwin Grant Conklin, Princeton University. *New York Times*. Sunday, March 5, 1922.

increased emotionalism let loose by the war and partly to the fact that uncertainty among scientists as to the causes of evolution has been interpreted by many non-scientific persons as throwing doubt upon its truth. Among those who have been leaders in this anti-evolution crusade are Billy Sunday and William Jennings Bryan. One who desires to know the truth about this or any other subject should inquire as to the competence of a witness, his impartiality, the truthfulness of his testimony, and whether he has any new evidence to offer. On each of these counts both Mr. Sunday and Mr. Bryan fail to qualify as trustworthy witnesses.

It is not on record that Mr. Bryan has ever made any discoveries with regard to evolution or that he has made any careful study of the subject, even at second hand. He frankly confesses that his motives are not to find the truth, but to maintain certain theological views which he thinks are taught by the Bible. He denies that there are any evidences for the truth of evolution and thereby shows that he is either unable to weigh and appreciate the great mass of evidence which has been presented or that he is purposely trying to mislead his hearers. And, finally, he offers no new evidences whatever for reopening a case which in the court of intelligent opinion throughout the world has been closed for nearly half a century.

The whole scientific world long since was convinced of the truth of evolution, and every year which has passed since the publication of "The Origin of Species" in 1859 has added to the mountain of evidence which has been piled up in its favor. It is fortunately not necessary here to review the evidences of evolution, for these may be found in many elementary textbooks on biology. These evidences are so numerous and come from so many sources that no intelligent man can study them at first hand and not be impressed with their importance. As a consequence there is probably not a single biological investigator in the world today who is not convinced of

the truth of evolution. The fact that these evidences accumulate year after year, often coming from fields which Darwin and his contemporaries never dreamed of, is still more convincing. I once heard Lord Kelvin, the great physicist, say that any hypothesis or theory if true should find new support continually as knowledge advances. This is just what has happened in the case of evolution.

#### ERRONEOUS AND MISLEADING

Mr. Bryan makes much of the idea that evolution is only a hypothesis, or as he prefers to call it, a guess. But unless he uses the word "guess" in the Yankee sense of practical certainty, this is an erroneous and misleading statement. Evolution is a guess in the same sense as is the doctrine of universal gravitation, or any other great generalization of science. Can one honestly call that doctrine a guess which is supported by all the evidence available, which continually receives additional support from new discoveries and which is not contradicted by any scientific evidence?

It is true that we do not know as much as we should like about the causes of evolution (though we know a good deal more than Mr. Bryan assumes), but the same may be said with regard to the causes of gravitation, light, electricity, chemical affinity, life or any other natural phenomenon. The problem of cause is never finally solved by science, for no sooner is one cause discovered than it gives rise to questions concerning the cause of this cause. Strange as it may seem, it is only the causes of supernatural phenomena that are supposed to be fully known.

Mr. Bryan is apparently ready to concede the evolution of rocks and plants, and possibly of animals, but he draws the line at the evolution of man. When he says, as he does repeatedly in his article in *The New York Times*, that there are no evidences of the evolution of man; that "neither Darwin nor his supporters have been

able to find a fact in the universe to support their hypothesis," it is hard to understand what he means. Darwin's works are filled with facts in support of evolution. They are composed of little except such facts, and multitudes of similar facts have been accumulated since Darwin's day.

Apparently Mr. Bryan demands to see a monkey or an ass transformed into a man, though he must be familiar enough with the reverse process. The Hotspurs who demand that evolution be re-enacted "while they wait" should emulate the example of Josh Billings, who said he had heard that a toad would live four hundred years; he was going to catch one and see for himself. The evidences for the major transformations in the evolution of man are not personal demonstrations, since they do not fall within the lifetime of a single individual, but they are the same sort of evidence as those for mountain building, stream erosion, glacial action or any other secular change.

The minor stages in evolution, known as mutations and elementary species, have been repeatedly observed in plants, animals and man. DeVries, Morgan and many others have demonstrated that sudden and very great changes or mutations sometimes occur, that these mutations may be combined to form races or elementary species, and there can be no reasonable doubt that these elementary species are combined to form Linnaean species. Among our domestic animals and cultivated plants such changes have been wrought as amount to specific differences. Darwin says that any naturalist, if he should find our races of domestic pigeons wild in nature, would classify them in not less than twenty species and three different genera. A similar statement could be made regarding fowls and dogs, as well as many fruits, grains and vegetables. In short, evolution has occurred under domestication.



## TRUE OF MAN ALSO

Everything which speaks for the evolution of plants and animals speaks plainly for the evolution of man. In the structure of the human body there is scarcely a bone, muscle, nerve or any other organ that does not have its counterpart in the higher primates and especially the anthropoid apes. Romanes, whom Mr. Bryan mentions as having lost and regained his religious faith, though he never lost his faith in evolution, says of these similarities between the body of man and that of the higher primates: "Here we have a fact, or rather a hundred thousand facts, that cannot be attributed to chance, and if we reject the natural explanation of hereditary descent from a common ancestor, we can only suppose that the Deity in creating man took the most scrupulous pains to make him in the image of the beast."

Not only the structure but the functions of the human body are fundamentally like those of other animals. We are born, nourished and develop, we reproduce, grow old and die, just as do other mammals. Specific functions of every organ are the same; drugs, diseases, injuries affect man as they do animals, and all the wonderful advances of experimental medicine are founded upon this fact.

Development from a fertilized egg to birth goes through the same stages in man and other mammals even to the repeating of fish-like gill slits, kidneys, heart and blood vessels. Indeed, development from the egg recapitulates some of the main stages of evolution—in it we see evolution repeated before our eyes. It is a curious fact that many persons who are seriously disturbed by scientific teachings as to the evolution or gradual development of the human race accept with equanimity the universal observation as to the development of the human individual—mind as well as body. The animal ancestry of the race is surely no more disturbing to philosophical

and religious beliefs than the germinal origin of the individual, and yet the latter is a fact of universal observation which cannot be relegated to the domain of theory and which cannot be successfully denied. If we admit the fact of the development of the entire individual from an egg, surely it matters little to our religious beliefs to admit the development or evolution of the race.

The discovery of fossil remains of man have proved conclusively that other species of men, more brute-like than any existing at the present time, preceded the present species, and the older these species are the more ape-like they were. Likewise their handiwork, implements and flints, are coarser and cruder the earlier they occur.

All the evidences of evolution drawn from morphology, physiology, embryology, paleontology, homology, heredity, variation, etc., speak for the evolution of man as much as for that of any other organism. If evolution is true anywhere it is true also of man.

Against all this mountain of evidence which Mr. Bryan tries to blow away by a word, what does he bring in support of his view of special creation? Only this, that evolution denies the Biblical account of the creation of man. What is that account? Here it is in a sentence: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Observe, ye literalists, that this does not say that God spoke man into existence, as when He said, "Let there be light; and there was light." But a process is described by which man was formed or moulded from the dust, as the Egyptian and Babylonian deities are said to have molded man from clay on a potter's wheel, and then to have breathed life into his nostrils. Since the Scriptures describe a process in the creation of man, the opponents of the theory of evolution ought to be able to conceive of a dignified and divine way in which the Creator fashioned man, but this

they do not do. The idea that the Eternal God took mud or mortar and moulded it with hands or tools into the human form is not only irreverent, it is ridiculous. How much more like the usual workings of that power, by whom and through whom are all things, is the view of evolution that God made the first man as He has made the last, and that His creative power is manifest just as truly and greatly in the origin of the last child of Adam, as in the origin of Adam himself.

Is it any more degrading to hold that man was made through a long line of animal ancestry than to believe that he was made directly from the dust? Surely the horse and the dog and the monkey belong to higher orders of existence than do the clod and the stone. Whether we accept the teachings of evolution or the most literal interpretation of the Biblical account we are compelled to recognize the fact that our bodily origin has been a humble one; as Sir Charles Lyell once said, "It is mud or monkey." But this lowly origin does not destroy the dignity of man; his real dignity consists not in his origin but in what he is and in what he may become.

If only the theological opponents of evolution could learn anything from past attempts to confute science by the Bible they would be more cautious. It was once believed universally that the earth was flat and that it was roofed over by a solid "firmament" and when scientific evidence was adduced to show that the earth was a sphere and that the "firmament" was not a solid roof, it was denounced as opposed to the Scriptures. Those who have visited the Columbian Library in the Cathedral of Seville will recall the Bible of Columbus with marginal notes in his own handwriting to prove that the sphericity of the earth was not opposed to the Scriptures, and a treatise written by him while in prison to pacify the Inquisition. Today only Voliva and his followers at Zion City maintain that the earth is flat, and the heavens a

solid dome, because this is apparently taught by the Scriptures.

The central position of the earth in the universe with all heavenly bodies revolving around it was held to be as certain as holy writ. All the world knows the story of "Starry Galileo and His Woes" at the hands of the Inquisition, but the Copernican theory was opposed not only by the Roman Catholic Church, but also by the leaders of the Reformation. Martin Luther denounced it as "the work of a fool," Melancthon declared that it was neither honest nor decent to teach this pernicious doctrine, and that it should be repressed by severe measures, and John Wesley declared that it "tended toward infidelity." Even as late as 1724 the Newtonian theory of gravity was assailed by eminent authorities as "atheistic," since "it drove God out of His universe and put a law in His place."

#### BRYAN'S AUTO DE FE

The conflict between geology and Genesis as to the days of creation and the age of the earth lasted until the middle of the last century, and students of Dana's geology will recall the reconciliation between the two which that great man devoutly undertook. But, by the ultra-orthodox, he and other Christian geologists were denounced as infidels and as impugners of the sacred record. It took three hundred years to end this conflict, if it may be said to be wholly ended now, but certainly no intelligent person now believes that the earth was made just 5,926 years ago and in six literal days.

And now comes Mr. Bryan in this twentieth century of enlightenment preaching a new *auto de fe*, attempting to establish an inquisition for the trial of science at the bar of theology! He proposes to prohibit the teaching of evolution by fine and imprisonment, to repeal a law of nature by a law of Kentucky. He proposes to gather

into the fold of his narrow theology all existing public and private schools, colleges and universities and to allow evolutionists and agnostics to found their own schools. In view of the fact that, with the exception of a few sectarian institutions, all our colleges and universities are dedicated to "the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men." that for a generation at least they have turned away from the teaching of dogmatic theology to the cultivation of science, literature and art, that they have during this period received great benefactions for the expressed or implied purpose of carrying on this work in the spirit of freedom to seek, to find and to teach the truth as God gives men to see the truth—in view of these considerations it may well be asked whether it would not be more fitting for Mr. Bryan to establish his own institution for teaching his own views of science and theology, as Dowie, for example, did at Zion City, rather than to attempt to convert existing institutions to that purpose.

Scientific investigators and productive scholars in almost every field have long since accepted evolution in the broadest sense as an established fact. Science now deals with the evolution of the elements, of the stars and solar system of the earth, of life upon the earth, of various types and species of plants and animals, of the body, mind and society of man, of science, art, government, education and religion. In the light of this great generalization all sciences, and especially those which have to do with living things, have made more progress in the last half century than in all the previous centuries of human history. Even progressive theology has come to regard evolution as an ally rather than as an enemy.

In the face of all these facts, Mr. Bryan and his kind hurl their medieval theology. It would be amusing if it were not so pathetic and disheartening to see these modern defenders of the faith beating their gongs and firing their giant crackers against the ramparts of science.



ANOTHER SCIENTIST'S REPLY TO  
MR. BRYAN<sup>1</sup>

*The real question is, Did God use evolution as His plan? If it could be shown that man, instead of being made in the image of God, is a development of beasts we would have to accept it, regardless of its effect, for truth is truth and must prevail. But when there is no proof we have a right to consider the effect of the acceptance of an unsupported hypothesis.—William Jennings Bryan, New York Times, Sunday, February 26, 1922.*

I appreciate the invitation of *The Times* to present the state of our knowledge today regarding Darwinism and the evolution of man, especially in relation to religion, the Bible, and the all-important question of the moral education of our youth. Thousands of good people throughout this country who love the Bible of their fathers and are full of religious faith have been deeply affected by the eloquent and sincere addresses which the great commoner has been delivering. Large audiences have listened to him in all parts of the Union with deep interest, and on the members of the Kentucky legislature he made so profound an impression that this body by only a very narrow vote missed the exclusion of evolutionary teaching in all the schools of the state.

As evidence of Mr. Bryan's sincerity, I have purposely quoted above the sentence which I consider the crux of his whole address, namely: "The real question is, Did God use evolution as His plan? If it could be shown that man, instead of being made in the image of God, is a development of beasts we would have to accept it, regardless of its effect, for truth is truth and must prevail." I interpret this sentence as meaning that he is open to conviction, even if convinced against his will. I am deeply impressed with the fact that he has familiarized himself with many of the debatable points in Darwin's

<sup>1</sup> By Henry Fairfield Osborn, President of the American Museum of Natural History, Vertebrate Paleontologist of the United States Geological Survey, Research Professor of Zoology in Columbia University. *New York Times*. Sunday, March 5, 1922.

opinions, such as the theory of sexual selection, and it is not at all surprising, not being a specialist in biology, that he is extremely confused—as, in fact, many evolutionists are—by the radical differences of opinion as to the power of natural selection itself, expressed by recent writers such as John Burroughs and Professor Bateson. If it is difficult for biologists to think straight on this very intricate subject of evolution, how much more difficult must it be for the layman? I have elsewhere shown in a recent number of *Science* that Bateson is living the life of a scientific specialist, out of the main current of biological discovery, and that his opinion that we have failed to discover the origin of species is valueless and directly contrary to the truth.

I have not yet had time to answer John Burroughs' wholly misleading article on natural selection in *The Atlantic Monthly*, but I would like to state positively, as a result of twenty-one years of a single research for the United States Geological Survey, that in my opinion natural selection is the only cause of evolution which has thus far been discovered and demonstrated. I believe there are many other causes which remain to be discovered. Mr. Bryan, who is an experienced politician, and who has known politicians to disagree, should not be surprised or misled when naturalists disagree in matters of opinion. No living naturalist, however, so far as I know, differs as to the immutable truth of evolution in the sense of the continuous fitness of plants and animals to their environment and the ascent of all the extinct and existing forms of life, including man, from an original and single cellular state.

There are two aspects of Mr. Bryan's address: One, religious and philosophical, on which I may first comment, the other, natural, or coming within the field of direct observation, namely, the origin of species and the origin of man. The former affects our religious beliefs or ideas of God and His relation to nature; the latter is simply a matter of direct observation of the testimony of

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the earth; the former will always be debatable and largely a matter of personal faith or of skepticism; the latter is a matter of the laboratory, of the field naturalist, of indefatigable digging in all parts of the world among the ancient archives of the earth's history. If Mr. Bryan, with an open heart and mind, would drop all his books and all the disputations among the doctors and study first hand the simple archives of nature, all his doubts would disappear; he would not lose his religion; he would become an evolutionist.

### "TRUTH IS TRUTH AND MUST PREVAIL"

These words constitute the solid rock on which enduring religion and the only enduring knowledge of nature rest, while the shifting sands of human opinion are swept hither and thither both in theology and in science. Wrecked on these sands of opinion are many great names, both in theology and in science, but fortunately there have lived some wise pilots of nature who would have kept our thinking straight if we had kept their counsel. I had the good fortune to fall under the influence of James McCosh, natural philosopher and divine, who in his lectures on "Christianity and Positivism" accepted evolution, with most of its implications, in the year 1876.

Thirteen years earlier, in 1863, Charles Kingsley, whose religion no one has ever challenged, struck the note of truth only four years after Darwin's "Origin of Species" appeared, when he wrote to Frederick Maurice, one of the most profoundly religious men that England has produced: "Darwin is conquering everywhere, and rushing in like a flood, by the mere force of truth and fact. The one or two who hold out [against Darwin] are forced to try all sorts of subterfuges as to fact, or else by evoking the *odium theologicum*. . . ." In the same letter Kingsley says: "The state of the scientific mind is

most curious; . . . they find that now they have got rid of an interfering God—a master magician, as I call it—they have to choose between the absolute empire of accident, and a living, immanent, ever-working God.”

Kingsley describes himself as “busy working out points of natural theology, by the strange light of Huxley, Darwin and Lyell. I think I shall come to something worth having before I have done.” While in the van of the religious thinkers of his time, Kingsley was not in a position to answer Mr. Bryan’s main question, “Did God use evolution as His plan?” for evolution in 1863 rested on the indirect or circumstantial evidence presented by Darwin, while in 1922 it is the most firmly established truth in the natural universe and, in Mr. Bryan’s language, we shall have to accept it regardless of its effect. Let us, therefore, glance at some of the effect. I am not writing to convince evolutionists, I am writing to convince Mr. Bryan himself and his many followers. That you may avoid all religious doubts and difficulties, let us accept as the foundation of your faith the creed which runs through the Old and New Testaments alike and is best expressed in the grand old Latin phrase, “*Pleni sunt coeli et terra tua gloria.*” Without this creed, you may be an atheist or an agnostic. With the creed you are in a secure citadel of faith, because when discovery follows discovery and you are obliged to surrender the preconceptions of man in his ignorance as to the sun moving round the earth, as Joshua believed, as to the flatness of the earth, as to the universe being formed in six days of twenty-four hours, as to all the millions of species of animals and plants being made within four days, as to man being made in the image of God in one day, as to woman being made out of the rib of man—you remain serene, because you humbly accept the universe and man as God willed them. You may be convinced that your misgivings and prejudices against nature will all be resolved, if you simply repeat to yourself: “I accept nature as God made it; truth is truth and must prevail.”

THE BIBLE A PROOF OF THE SPIRITUAL AND MORAL  
EVOLUTION OF MAN

Nothing should be more clearly or more emphatically taught to our youth than that the Bible is the story of the spiritual and moral progress of man, in less degree his intellectual progress—in these senses a perpetual source of inspiration, of religious consolation, and the most permanent foundation of conduct. We naturalists may accept as transcendent teaching that the universe is by no means the result of accident or chance, but of an omnipresent beauty and order, in the Old Testament attributed to Jehovah, in our language to God. Evolution by no means takes God out of the universe, as Mr. Bryan supposes, but it greatly increases both the wonder, the mystery, and the marvelous order which we call “natural law,” pervading all nature.

No child should be taught that the Bible tells the story of nature as it has been revealed to us through two thousand years of observation, and especially during the last one hundred years. There was no curiosity of nature among the writers of the Bible, as there is little natural curiosity among Orientals today. It was not until the Book of Job was written, about 450 B.C., that we find the guiding precept of the naturalist, “Speak to the earth and it shall teach thee.” When Mr. Bryan observes that evolution finds “no support in the Bible,” he is absolutely right; just as he is absolutely wrong when he maintains that evolution ends in atheism. On this point I know I shall not convince him if I quote any scientific authority, but I feel that I may direct Mr. Bryan’s attention to a writer that he has evidently not studied, namely, the great theologian of the fifth century, St. Augustine, 354-430 A.D. I may quote St. Augustine on two points, first, as to the wisdom of leaving nature to the naturalists:

It very often happens that there is some question as to the earth or the sky, or the other elements of this world . . . re-



specting which one who is not a Christian has knowledge derived from most certain reasoning or observation, and it is very disgraceful and mischievous and of all things to be carefully avoided, that a Christian speaking of such matters as being according to the Christian Scriptures, should be heard by an unbeliever talking such nonsense that the unbeliever perceiving him to be as wide from the mark as east from west, can hardly restrain himself from laughing.

To Augustine also Mr. Bryan may be referred for a sound and thoroughly modern theistic conception of evolution. Augustine held that all development takes its natural course through the powers imparted to matter by the Creator; even the bodily structure of man himself is according to this plan, and, therefore, a product of this natural development; he taught that in the institution of nature we should not look for miracles, but for the laws of nature; he distinctly rejected the Mosaic idea of the six-day creation, in favor of the teaching which, without violence to language, we may call a theory of evolution; that all things developed by causal energy and potency, not only the heavens, but also those living things which the waters and the earth produced, so that in due time, after long delays, they developed into their perfected forms.

We may now leave this metaphysical part of the subject, and return to the evidence that evolution was the plan and the only plan of nature; that all species of animals and plants originated in this way; that man has ascended from the ranks of nature. There was a time when man considered himself greatly superior to the animal kingdom, in fact the Psalmist exalts him, giving him dominion over the whole earth; but since 1914 man has become more humble, he is not quite so confident of his superiority over the rest of God's creation.

#### ORIGIN OF SPECIES ABSOLUTELY SOLVED

The mode of origin of species was practically discovered by a little-known German paleontologist by the name of Waagen in 1869, but, like the great discovery of

Mendel in heredity, this truth has been long in making its way, even among biologists. Waagen's observations that species do not originate by chance or by accident, as Darwin at one time supposed, but through a continuous and well-ordered process, has since been confirmed by an overwhelming volume of testimony, so that we are now able to assemble and place in order line after line of animals in their true evolutionary succession, extending, in the case of what I have called the *édition de luxe* of the horses, over millions of years. We speak to the earth from Eocene times onward to the closing age of man, and it always teaches us exactly the same story. These facts are so well known and make up such an army of evidence, that they form the chief foundation of the statement that evolution has long since passed out of the domain of hypothesis and theory, to which Mr. Bryan refers, into the domain of natural law.

Evolution takes its place with the gravitation law of Newton. It should be taught in our schools simply as nature speaks to us about it, and entirely separated from the opinions, materialistic or theistic, which have clustered about it. This simple, direct teaching of nature is full of moral and spiritual force, if we keep the element of human opinion out of it. The moral principle inherent in evolution is that nothing can be gained in this world without an effort; the ethical principle inherent in evolution is that the best only has the right to survive; the spiritual principle in evolution is the evidence of beauty, of order, and of design in the daily myriad of miracles to which we owe our existence. This is my answer to Mr. Bryan's very natural solicitude about the influence of evolution in our schools and colleges—a solicitude not inherent in the subject itself, but in the foolishness and conceit of certain of the teachers who are privileged to teach of the processes of life.

## EVOLUTION OF MAN FIRMLY ESTABLISHED

It would not be true to say that the evolution of man rests upon evidence as complete as that of the horse, for example, because we have only traced man's ancestors back for a period of four hundred thousand years, as geologic time was conservatively estimated in 1893 by Secretary Walcott of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington; whereas, we have traced the horse back for a period of three million years, according to similar estimates of geological time.

The very recent discovery of tertiary man, which I have just described in *Natural History* (November-December, 1921), living long before the Ice Age, certainly capable of walking in an erect position, having a hand and a foot fashioned like our own, also a brain of sufficient intelligence to fashion many different kinds of implements, to make a fire, to make flint tools which may have been used for the dressing of hides as clothing, constitutes the most convincing answer to Mr. Bryan's call for more evidence. It once more reminds us of the ignorance of man of the processes of nature, and sets a new boundary beyond which digging in the earth for more of truth must be directed. This Foxhall man, found near Ipswich, England, thus far known only by the flint implements he made and his fire, is the last bit of evidence in the direction of giving man a descent line of his own far back in geologic time. It tends to remove man still further from the great lines which led to the man apes, the chimpanzee, the orang, the gorilla and the gibbon. This is not guess work, this is a fact. It is another truth which we shall have to accept regardless of its effect. No naturalist has ever ventured to place man so far back in geologic time as this actual discovery of the Foxhall man places him. In this instance again truth is stranger than hypothesis or speculation.

Nearer to us is the Piltdown man, found not far

from seventy-five miles to the southwest of Ipswich, England; still nearer in geologic time is the Heidelberg man, found on the Neckar River; still nearer is the Neanderthal man, whom we now know all about—his frame, his head form, his industries, his ceremonial burial of the dead, also evidence of his belief in a future existence; nearer still is the Cro-Magnon man, who lived about thirty thousand years ago, our equal if not our superior in intelligence. This chain of human ancestors was totally unknown to Darwin. He could not have even dreamed of such a flood of proof and truth. It is a dramatic circumstance that Darwin had within his reach the head of the Neanderthal man without realizing that it constituted the “missing link” between man and the lower order of creation. All this evidence is to-day within reach of every schoolboy. It is at the service of Mr. Bryan. It will, we are convinced, satisfactorily answer in the negative his question: “Is it not more rational to believe in the creation of man by separate act of God than to believe in evolution without a particle of evidence?”

### HAVE THE EVOLUTIONISTS ADMITTED DEFEAT? <sup>1</sup>

Anyone familiar with the work of scientists at first hand knows that the scientific attitude involves a humility in the face of facts which prevents premature dogmatism. The address of Professor William Bateson at Toronto in December, 1921, is being quoted—in spots—by the anti-evolutionists; for Professor Bateson frankly admitted that nothing is yet *scientifically known* concerning the origin of species. This seems, at first glance, like a confirmation of the statement that evolutionists are simply engaged in guessing; and it is being thus used by

<sup>1</sup> By Gerald Birnie Smith, professor in the Divinity School, University of Chicago. *Journal of Religion*. 2: 245-62. May, 1922. Can Christianity Welcome Freedom of Teaching?

the Fundamentalists. It rhymes well with their other citations from scientists to the effect that Darwinism is now discredited. But the concluding paragraph of Professor Bateson's address deserves attention; for it shows how far removed is his attitude of scientific honesty from the dogmatic attitude of the anti-evolutionists. Said he:

I have put to you very frankly the considerations which have made us agnostic as to the actual mode and processes of evolution.

When such confessions are made the enemies of science see their chance. If we cannot declare here and now how species arose, they will obligingly offer us solutions with which obscurantism is satisfied. Let us then proclaim in precise and unmistakable language that our faith in evolution is unshaken. Every available line of argument converges on this inevitable conclusion. The obscurantist has nothing to suggest which is worth a moment's attention. The difficulties which weigh upon the professional biologist need not trouble the layman. Our doubts are not as to the reality or truth of evolution, but as to the origin of species, a technical, almost domestic problem. Any day that mystery may be solved. The discoveries of the last twenty-five years enable us for the first time to discuss these questions intelligently and on a basis of fact. That synthesis will follow on an analysis we do not and cannot doubt.

In other words, the hypothesis of evolution is an indispensable instrument for scientific research; although no one is yet in a position to declare finally just what is the exact process by which new species arise. Scientists today await the detailed researches of scientists in the future in order to construct a theory which shall account for all the facts in detail.

There is in this scientific attitude something so fine in its spirit of humility and devotion that it should be welcomed by religion. To be willing to follow the leading of the facts when these have been surely identified, to trust to the cooperative labors of scientists everywhere to contribute to a constantly growing knowledge of the world in which we live, to use hypotheses in so honest a way as to provide for their constant modification in the interests of truth—all this is what we sorely need to save us from faddists and undisciplined enthusiasts.



And this Mr. Bryan caricatures as an irresponsible attitude in which a "guess" is made supreme! It bodes ill for a religion if its advocates are incapable of appreciating the spiritual value of scientific honesty.

### A REPLY TO MR. BRYAN IN THE NAME OF RELIGION<sup>1</sup>

The editor of *The Times* has asked me to reply to Mr. Bryan's statement on "God and Evolution." I do so, if only to voice the sentiments of a large number of Christian people who in the name of religion are quite as shocked as any scientist could be in the name of science at Mr. Bryan's sincere but appalling obscurantism.

So far as the scientific aspect of the discussion is concerned, scientists may well be left to handle it. Suffice it to say that when Mr. Bryan reduces evolution to a hypothesis and then identifies a hypothesis with a "guess" he is guilty of a sophistry so shallow and palpable that one wonders at his hardihood in risking it. A guess is a haphazard venture of opinion without investigation before or just reason afterward to sustain it; it is a *jeu d'esprit*. But a hypothesis is a seriously proffered explanation of a difficult problem ventured when careful investigation of facts points to it, retained as long as the discovered facts sustain it, and surrendered as soon as another hypothesis enters the field which better explains the phenomena in question.

Every universally accepted scientific truth which we possess began as a hypothesis, is in a sense a hypothesis still, and has become a hypothesis transformed into a settled conviction as the mass of accumulating evidence left no questions as to its substantial validity. To call evolution, therefore, a guess is one thing; to tell the truth

<sup>1</sup> By Harry Emerson Fosdick, professor in Union Theological Seminary and preacher at the First Presbyterian Church, New York. *New York Times*. Sunday, March 12, 1922.

about it is another, for to tell the truth involves recognizing the tireless patience with which generations of scientists in every appropriate field of inquiry have been investigating all discoverable facts that bear upon the problem of mutation of species, with substantial unanimity as to the results so far as belief in the hypothesis of evolution is concerned. When Darwin, after years of patient, unremitting study, ventured his hypothesis in explanation of evolution—a hypothesis which was bound to be corrected and improved—one may say anything else one will about it except to call it a “guess.” That is the one thing which it certainly was not. Today, the evolutionary hypothesis, after many years of pitiless attack and searching investigation, is, as a whole, the most adequate explanation of the facts with regard to the origin of species that we have yet attained, and it was never so solidly grounded as it is today. Dr. Osborn is making, surely, a safe statement when he says that no living naturalist, so far as he knows, “differs as to the immutable truth of evolution in the sense of the continuous fitness of plants and animals to their environment and the ascent of all the extinct and existing forms of life, including man, from an original and single cellular state.”

### THE REAL SITUATION

When, therefore, Mr. Bryan says, “Neither Darwin nor his supporters have been able to find a fact in the universe to support their hypothesis,” it would be difficult to imagine a statement more obviously and demonstrably mistaken. The real situation is that every fact on which investigation has been able to lay its hands helps to confirm the hypothesis of evolution. There is no known fact which stands out against it. Each newly discovered fact fits into an appropriate place in it. So far as the general outlines of it are concerned, the Copernican astronomy itself is hardly established more solidly.

My reply, however, is particularly concerned with the theological aspects of Mr. Bryan's statement. There seems to be no doubt about what his position is. He proposes to take his science from the Bible. He proposes, certainly, to take no science that is contradicted by the Bible. He says, "Is it not strange that Christians will accept Darwinism as a substitute for the Bible when the Bible not only does not support Darwin's hypothesis, but directly and expressly contradicts it?" What other interpretation of such a statement is possible except this: that the Bible is for Mr. Bryan an authoritative textbook in biology—and if in biology, why not in astronomy, cosmogony, chemistry or any other science, art, concern of man whatever? One who is acquainted with the history of theological thought gasps as he reads this. At the close of the sixteenth century a Protestant theologian set down the importance of the Book of Genesis as he understood it. He said that the text of Genesis "must be received strictly;" that "it contains all knowledge, human and divine;" that "twenty-eight articles of the Augsburg Confession are to be found in it;" that "it is an arsenal of arguments against all sects and sorts of atheists, pagans, Jews, Turks, Tartars, Papists, Calvinists, Socinians and Baptists;" that it is "the source of all science and arts, including law, medicine, philosophy and rhetoric," "the source and essence of all histories and of all professions, trades and works," "an exhibition of all virtues and vices," and "the origin of all consolation."

One had supposed that the days when such wild anachronisms could pass muster as good theology were passed, but Mr. Bryan is regalanizing into life that same outmoded idea of what the Bible is and proposes in the twentieth century that we shall use Genesis, which reflects the pre-scientific view of the Hebrew people centuries before Christ as an authoritative textbook. in science, beyond whose conclusions we dare not go.

## MARTIN LUTHER AND BRYAN

Why, then, should Mr. Bryan complain because his attitude toward evolution is compared repeatedly, as he says it is, with the attitude of the theological opponents of Copernicus and Galileo? On his own statement, the parallelism is complete. Martin Luther attacked Copernicus with the same appeal which Mr. Bryan uses. He appealed to the Bible. He said: "People gave ear to an upstart astrologer who strove to show that the earth revolves, not the heavens or the firmament, the sun and the moon. Whoever wishes to appear clever must devise some new system, which of all systems is, of course, the very best. This fool wishes to reverse the entire science of astronomy, but sacred Scripture tells us that Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, and not the earth."

Nor was Martin Luther wrong if the Bible is indeed an authoritative text book in science. The denial of the Copernican astronomy with its moving earth can unquestionably be found in the Bible if one starts out to use the Bible that way—"The world also is established, that it cannot be moved" (Psalm 93:1); "Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be moved forever" (Psalm 104:5). Moreover, in those bygone days, the people who were then using Mr. Bryan's method of argument did quote these passages as proof, and Father Inchofer felt so confident that he cried,

The opinion of the earth's motion is of all heresies the most abominable, the most pernicious, the most scandalous; the immovability of the earth is thrice sacred; argument against the immortality of the soul, the existence of God, and the incarnation should be tolerated sooner than an argument to prove that the earth moves.

Indeed, as everybody knows who has seriously studied the Bible, that book represents in its cosmology and its cosmogony the view of the physical universe which everywhere obtained in the ancient Semitic world. The earth was flat and was founded on an underlying sea (Psalm 136:6; Psalm 24:1-2; Genesis 7:11); it was stationary;

the heavens, like an upturned bowl, "strong as a molten mirror" (Job 37: 18; Genesis 1: 6-8; Isaiah 40: 22; Psalm 104: 2), rested on the earth beneath (Amos 9: 6; Job 26: 11); the sun, moon and stars moved within the firmament of special purpose to illumine man (Genesis 1: 14-19); there was a sea above the sky, "the waters which were above the firmament" (Genesis 1: 7; Psalm 148: 4) and through "the windows of heaven" the rain came down (Genesis 7: 11; Psalm 78: 23); beneath the earth was mysterious Sheol where dwelt the shadowy dead (Isaiah 14: 9-11); and all this had been made in six days, each of which had had a morning and an evening, a short and measurable time before (Genesis 1).

Are we to understand that this is Mr. Bryan's science, that we must teach this science in our schools, that we are estopped by divine revelation from ever going beyond this science? Yet this is exactly what Mr. Bryan would force us to if with intellectual consistency he should carry out the implications of his appeal to the Bible against the scientific hypothesis of evolution in biology.

### THE BIBLE'S PRECIOUS TRUTHS

One who is a teacher and preacher of religion raises his protest against all this just because it does such gross injustice to the Bible. There is no book to compare with it. The world never needed more its fundamental principles of life, its fully developed views of God and man, its finest faiths and hopes and loves. When one reads an article like Mr. Bryan's one feels, not that the Bible is being defended, but that it is being attacked. Is a 'cello defended when instead of being used for music it is advertised as a good dinner table? Mr. Bryan does a similar disservice to the Bible when, instead of using it for what it is, the most noble, useful, inspiring and inspired book of spiritual life which we have, the record of God's progressive unfolding of His character and will from early primitive beginnings to the high noon in Christ, he



sets it up for what it is not and never was meant to be—a procrustean bed to whose infallible measurements all human thought must be forever trimmed.

The fundamental interest which leads Mr. Bryan and others of his school to hate evolution is the fear that it will depreciate the dignity of man. Just what do they mean? Even in the Book of Genesis God made man out of the dust of the earth. Surely, that is low enough to start and evolution starts no lower. So long as God is the creative power, what difference does it make whether out of the dust by sudden fiat or out of the dust by gradual process God brought man into being? Here man is and what he is he is. Were it decided that God had dropped him from the sky, he still would be the man he is. If it is decided that God brought him up by slow gradations out of lower forms of life, he still is the man he is.

The fact is that the process by which man came to be upon the planet is a very important scientific problem, but it is not a crucially important religious problem. Origins prove nothing in the realm of values. To all folk of spiritual insight man, no matter by what process he at first arrived, is the child of God, made in His image, destined for His character. If one could appeal directly to Mr. Bryan he would wish to say: let the scientists thresh out the problems of man's biological origin but in the meantime do not teach men that if God did not make us by fiat then we have nothing but a bestial heritage. That is a lie which once believed will have a terrific harvest. It is regrettable business that a prominent Christian should be teaching that.

One writes this with warm sympathy for the cause which gives Mr. Bryan such anxious concern. He is fearful that the youth of the new generation, taught the doctrine of a materialistic science, may lose that religious faith in God and in the realities of the spiritual life on which alone an abiding civilization can be founded. His

fear is well grounded, as every one closely associated with the students of our colleges and universities knows. Many of them are sadly confused, mentally in chaos, and, so far as any guiding principles of religious faith are concerned, are often without chart, compass or anchor.

#### DANGER OF MATERIALISTIC TEACHING

There are types of teaching in our universities which are hostile to any confidence in the creative reality of the spiritual life—dreary philosophies which reduce everything to predetermined mechanical activity. Some classrooms doubtless are, as Mr. Bryan thinks, antagonistic, in the effect which they produce, alike to sustained integrity of character, buoyancy and hopefulness of life and progress in society. But Mr. Bryan's association of this pessimistic and materialistic teaching with the biological theory of evolution is only drawing a red herring across the real trail. The distinction between inspiring, spiritually minded teachers and deadening, irreligious teachers is not at the point of belief in evolution at all. Our greatest teachers, as well as our poorest, those who are profoundly religious as well as those who are scornfully irreligious, believe in evolution. The new biology has no more to do with the difference between them than the new astronomy or the new chemistry. If the hypothesis of evolution were smashed tomorrow, there would be no more religiously minded scientists and no fewer irreligious ones.

#### HEART OF PROBLEM

The real crux of the problem in university circles is whether we are going to think of creative reality in physical or in spiritual terms, and that question cannot be met on the lines that Mr. Bryan has laid down. Indeed, the real enemies of the Christian faith, so far as our students are concerned, are not the evolutionary biologists, but folk like Mr. Bryan who insist on setting up

artificial adhesions between Christianity and outgrown scientific opinions, and who proclaim that we cannot have one without the other. The pity is that so many students will believe him and, finding it impossible to retain the outgrown scientific opinions, will give up Christianity in accordance with Mr. Bryan's insistence that they must.

Quite as amazing as his view of the Bible is Mr. Bryan's view of the effect of evolution upon man's thought of God. If ever a topsy-turvy statement was made about any matter capable of definitive information, Mr. Bryan's statement deserves that description, for it turns the truth upside down. He says: "The theistic evolutionist puts God so far away that He ceases to be a present influence in the life. . . . Why should we want to imprison God in an impenetrable past? This is a living world. Why not a living God upon the throne? Why not allow Him to work now?" But the effect of evolution upon man's thought of God, as every serious student of theology knows, has been directly the opposite of what Mr. Bryan supposes. It was in the eighteenth century that men thought of God as the vague, dim figure over the crest of the first hill who gave this universal toboggan its primeval shove and has been watching it sliding ever since. It was in the eighteenth century that God was thought of as the absentee landlord who had built the house and left it—as the shipwright who had built the ship and then turned it over to the master mariners, his natural laws. Such ideas of God are associated with eighteenth century Deism, but the nineteenth century's most characteristic thought of God was in terms of immanence—God here in this world, the life of all that lives, the sustaining energy of all that exists, as our spirits are in our bodies, permeating, vitalizing, directing all.

The idea of evolution was one of the great factors in this most profitable change. In a world nailed together like a box, God, the Creator, had been thought of as a carpenter who created the universe long ago; now,

in a world growing like a tree, ever more putting out new roots and new branches, God has more and more been seen as the indwelling spiritual life. Consider that bright light of nineteenth century Christianity, Henry Drummond, the companion of D. L. Moody in his evangelistic tours. He believed in evolution. What did it do to his thought of God? Just what it has done to the thought of multitudes. Said Drummond: "If God appears periodically He disappears periodically. If He comes upon the scene at special crises, He is absent from the scene in the intervals. Whether is all-God or occasional-God the nobler theory? Positively the idea of an immanent God, which is the God of evolution, is infinitely grander than the occasional wonder-worker who is the God of an old theology."

Mr. Bryan proposes, then, that instead of entering into this rich heritage where ancient faith, flowering out in new world views, grows richer with the passing centuries, we shall run ourselves into his mold of medievalism. He proposes, too, that his special form of medievalism shall be made authoritative by the state, promulgated as the only teaching allowed in the schools. Surely, we can promise him a long, long road to travel before he plunges the educational system of this country into such incredible folly, and if he does succeed in arousing a real battle over the issue we can promise him also that just as earnestly as the scientists will fight against him in the name of scientific freedom of investigation so will multitudes of Christians fight against him in the name of their religion and their God.

### DARWIN'S LOSS OF FAITH EXPLAINED<sup>1</sup>

[Mr. Bryan] reminds his readers that in his youth Darwin held the evangelical views as to the Bible and the divine origin of the Christian religion, while in his

<sup>1</sup> From *Religion or Dogma?* by Newell Dwight Hillis. *Forum*, 70: 1681-97. July, 1923.

age, after long defending the doctrine of evolution, his belief in the being of God and in any revelation whatsoever weakened, until at last he announced himself an "agnostic," unwilling to trust the human intellect. "when it draws such grand conclusions concerning God and heaven." But Mr. Bryan has overlooked the larger fact that if forty years of neglect of the nerve of religious sensation starved to death that nerve's vision, Darwin's faculties toward music, poetry, dramatic art, and painting also suffered grievously by the starvation and neglect of those forty years. In his "Life and Letters," Darwin tells us that in his youth he loved the drama, listened with rapturous enthusiasm to those actors who interpreted Hamlet, Macbeth, and King Lear, frequented concerts, the oratorio, and grand opera. Then came forty crowded and tumultuous years during which he gave every minute of time and every atom of strength to a hypothesis that he realized might prove to be only a "brilliant guess," namely, that the method of creation was the method exhibited in acorns going slowly toward oaks, in tents going toward houses and forked sticks going toward plows, and that "perhaps" the fire mist may have developed into a habitable world. In the realm of the heart, a man must keep his friendship in good repair. Even mothers learn to love, by loving. Charles Darwin so starved the religious side of his soul that the spiritual optic nerve atrophied after the fashion of the mole, that refuses to come out into the sunshine, or the blind fish that remain in the dark waters of Mammoth Cave. This confession of Darwin as to the grievous injury to his faith in God that followed forty years of total neglect, simply helps us understand how it was that in old age, when his health broke, and his physician sent him to the theater, the opera, to the picture gallery and cathedral, he found himself incapable of becoming interested in the slightest degree.

Darwin's experience, therefore, simply illustrates the law that the nerve toward the library, the gallery, the



realm of music, and even the nerve of religious sensation, can be atrophied by neglect. "There is a little flower in the garden of the soul named reverence," said Oliver Wendel Holmes, "and I find it must be watered at least once a week." What Mr. Darwin's example proves, is the peril of neglecting any of the faculties of the soul and that the nerve of religious sensation must be taken care of, nourished, and cultivated. That One whose name is above every name, once likened Himself to a vine—the vine of life, the vine whose leaves heal wounds, the wounds of the nations, but He indicated that even that divine vine has to be watered, pruned, and taken care of, for He added, "My Father is the Husbandman" toiling in the vineyard. The real lesson of Darwin's life, therefore, is not that belief in evolution reacts upon and destroys religious faith—the real lesson of his unhappy old age is this: at all costs and hazards guard the integrity of the spiritual optic nerve; nourish and develop by exercise the faculty of religious sensation. He who by sin cuts a bloody gash in that nerve will soon come to blindness, and think that there is no longer a God in the sky.

### THE BIBLE NOT A BOOK OF SCIENCE<sup>1</sup>

How, then, can we reconcile the first chapter of Genesis with modern science and evolution? We simply do not try to reconcile them. A moment's thought will convince us that there were, as we have seen, two possible methods open if there was to be a divine revelation to man. One would be a perfect, final, infallible compendium of universal knowledge let down from heaven in a finished and perfect book. But supposing such a book were written in terms of modern science, about electrons, relativity, radium, the nebular hypothesis, etc. Of what possible moral and spiritual use would it have been to

<sup>1</sup> By Sherwood Eddy in the pamphlet, *Science and Religion*.

men during the last five thousand years, or in any age? It would have been incomprehensible and impractical. Even if it were written in terms of modern twentieth century science it would be out of date in a few years, not necessarily because it would be untrue, but inadequate.

If, on the other hand, man must learn by gradual progress in education and discipline, the only other alternative to the above would seem to be that of a *gradual, progressive revelation* on the principle "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." If we turn to the first chapter of the Bible we read: "In the beginning—God!" More than thirty times in this chapter God is referred to as the author of all. Here is the divinely inspired spiritual truth that it is God's world and that in it He has a purpose of good. Then we read on through that opening poem containing a beautiful picture of a world described as created in six days, each with its evening and morning. As we contrast this statement with those of certain other sacred books describing the world as hatched out of a golden egg, in seven round continents and seven concentric seas of milk, melted butter, etc., we see the simple grandeur of the Biblical narrative. But in no sense is it scientific and by no conceivable stretch of the imagination can it truly be made so. The Bible is a marvelous book of poetry, prose, history, geography, cosmogony and a hundred other things, but for none of these things was it written. Its one central purpose was that believing, we might have *life*; to so reveal God to man in a revelation culminating in Jesus Christ, that we might have life in Him. To force it to do duty as science, history, geography, astronomy, geology, etc., is to repeat the catastrophe of those who have opposed science by Scripture from the days of Augustine to the present.

Let us, therefore, gladly receive the revelation of God's truth equally in His word and in His world, in

religion and in science. We shall find one vast, mighty, majestic process culminating in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ and in the Kingdom of God as a new social order. Thus through all the ages one increasing purpose runs, and love is found creation's final law. Thus like the author of the Hebrews, "receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken," we accept God's truth through the gradual, developing, evolutionary revelation of Himself in religion and science alike.

### JOINT STATEMENT UPON THE RELATIONS OF SCIENCE AND RELIGION, BY RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND SCIENTISTS<sup>1</sup>

We, the undersigned, deeply regret that in recent controversies there has been a tendency to present science and religion as irreconcilable and antagonistic domains of thought, for in fact they meet distinct human needs, and in the rounding out of human life they supplement rather than displace or oppose each other.

*The purpose of science is to develop, without prejudice or preconception of any kind, a knowledge of the facts, the laws and the processes of nature. The even more important task of religion, on the other hand, is to develop the consciences, the ideals, and the aspirations of mankind.* Each of these two activities represents a deep and vital function of the soul of man, and both are necessary for the life, the progress, and the happiness of the human race.

It is a sublime conception of God which is furnished by science, and one wholly consonant with the highest ideals of religion, when it represents Him as revealing Himself through countless ages in the development of the earth as an abode for man and in the age-long

<sup>1</sup> Prepared by Dr. Robert A. Millikan, director of the Norman Bridge Laboratory of Physics, Pasadena, Cal. The statement appeared in *Science*, n.s. 57: 630-1. June 1, 1923. Also in *Review of Reviews*. 68: 88-9. July, 1923.

inbreathing of life into its constituent matter, culminating in man with his spiritual nature and all his God-like powers.

*Partial list of signers. Scientists:* Charles D. Walcott, geologist, president of the National Academy of Sciences, president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and head of the Smithsonian Institution of Washington; Henry Fairfield Osborn, paleontologist, president of the American Museum of Natural History, New York; Edwin Grant Conklin, zoologist, head of the department of Zoology, Princeton University; James Rowland Angell, psychologist, president of Yale University; John Merle Coulter, botanist, head of the department of Botany, University of Chicago; Michael I. Pupin, physicist and engineer, professor of Electromechanics and director of Phoenix Research Laboratory, Columbia University; William James Mayo, surgeon, Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, Rochester, Minnesota; William Wallace Campbell, astronomer, director of Lick Observatory and president-elect of the University of California; Robert A. Millikan, physicist, director of Norman Bridge Laboratory of Physics, Pasadena, California; William Henry Welch, pathologist, director of the School of Hygiene and Public Health, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore; John C. Merriam, paleontologist, president of the Carnegie Institution of Washington.

*Religious leaders:* Bishop William Lawrence, Episcopalian, Bishop of Massachusetts, Boston; Bishop William Thomas Manning, Episcopalian, New York City; Bishop Joseph H. Johnson, Episcopalian, Bishop of Los Angeles, California; Dr. Henry van Dyke, Presbyterian, preacher and poet, Princeton, New Jersey; President James Gore King McClure, Presbyterian, McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago; President Clarence A. Barbour, Baptist, Rochester Theological Seminary, Rochester, New York; President Ernest D. Burton, Baptist theologian,

University of Chicago; President Henry Churchill King, Congregationalist, Oberlin Graduate School of Theology, Oberlin, Ohio; Bishop Francis John McConnell, Methodist, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

## THE INFLUENCE OF SCIENCE ON CHRISTIANITY<sup>1</sup>

*God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.*"—JOHN 4:24.

It is a commonplace that all religions, even though their formularies and sacred books seem to guarantee absence of change, are constantly modified. Unless religion is moribund, it is dynamic and not static. It is a living process within the spirit of man; and, as such, it is profoundly affected by the ideas and emotions of the community in which it exists. Religious thought and feeling alike are influenced, for good or ill, by contemporary political, social and intellectual movements. In the domain of politics, for instance. Christianity was, in medieval times, held to justify the claim of ecclesiastics to control secular princes. Subsequently it was regarded as a bulwark of the divine right of kings. Some now believe it to sanction the divine right of democracy. It would be easy to collect many such examples of the way in which Christianity has taken color from its environment. Notoriously, in the domain of ethics, it has sometimes been disastrously affected by the spirit of the age. There have thus resulted bewildering paradoxes in which cynics, like Gibbon, have rejoiced.

But today I would emphasize the gain to Christianity which has come from secular progress external to itself. In the second century of the Christian era there was pronounced ethical progress in the Roman Empire. In part, doubtless, this was due to the rise of Christianity; but

<sup>1</sup> By Ernest William Barnes, Sc.D., F.R.S. Canon of Westminster Abbey, London. Sermon preached in Liverpool Cathedral in connection with the meeting of the British Association. *Christian Work*. 116: 12-14. January 5, 1924.



it was a wide movement for which that religion can by no means claim the whole credit. The ethical uplift showed itself among classes untouched by Christian beliefs. It thus did much to foster the spread of the religion of Christ, for the seed fell on prepared soil. Thirteen centuries later another secular movement invigorated Christian thought. I need not insist on the effect which the humanism of the Renaissance had on the Christian faith. As all know, it led to Reformation and counter-Reformation; to religious changes destined to be as permanent and valuable as they were extensive. But especially during the last century there has been a movement of human thought as influential and as valuable as that of Renaissance humanism. The assumptions and methods of science have affected the whole outlook of educated men. In particular those branches of science which are concerned with the domains of physics and biology have radically changed our conceptions both of the structure of the visible universe and also of the development of life upon this earth. The effect of the scientific movement, alike on organized religion and on private faith, has been prodigious. Under any circumstances, it would have been far-reaching. But, unfortunately, representative Christian leaders, with the eager support of their communions, opposed the new scientific conceptions as they appeared. Science was then compelled to fight for autonomy on its own territory, and, as Dr. Hobson says in his recently published Gifford Lectures, the result has been a prolonged struggle, "in which theology has lost every battle." As a consequence it is now widely believed by the populace that Christianity itself has been worsted.

At least a generation must pass before it is generally recognized that, with regard to religion, science is neutral. Educated men know that the traditional presentation of the Christian faith must be shorn of what have become mythological accretions. But Christianity

resembles a biological organism with a racial future. In the struggle for existence it gains strength and power by utilizing its environment. It seeks both freedom from old limitations and increased mastery of hostile forces. Amid all change its essential character is preserved, for it rests on historical facts combined with permanent intuitions and continually repeated experiences of the human spirit. Because men are constrained by their very nature to believe that goodness and truth express the inner spiritual character of the universe; because the Christ of the gospels continues to be their ideal man; because men's search for spiritual reality is rewarded by a sense of the presence of God; because that presence conveys what they can best express as peace and joy in Christ; because they find in the teaching of Jesus confirmation and explanation of their richest experiences and highest guide and strength, Master and Saviour—for such reasons men are drawn to Him and call themselves by His name. Such reasons, moreover, have always been fundamental. We find them, in their full simplicity, in the earliest preaching of Christianity; in the letters of St. Paul and in that mystical treatise, written by his greatest follower, which we call the Gospel according to St. John. I do not suggest that all members of Christian communions have gained for themselves certainty reached by personal spiritual illumination. Capacity to gain and use the highest quality of religious understanding is rare. The great pioneers, whether in science or religion, are few. Men usually accept both scientific and religious truth at second hand. The expert speaks with the accent of what seems to us to be unmistakable authority. We make such imperfect tests as we are able to apply to his teachings, and perforce rest content.

We must never forget that all human activity, and not merely those aspects which we call science and religion, rests upon unproved and unprovable assumptions. The existence of such assumptions is often ignored.

They are there, none the less. Often, lazily and hazily, we conceal them under the term "common sense." Faith, however, is a necessity of existence. Zealots sometimes have contended, and still contend, that there is a moral value in blind faith. But the modern world, so far as it has fallen under the sway of scientific method, demands that faith shall be reasonable and not blind.

In science we build upon the assumption that the processes of nature can be represented by schemes that are, to us, rational. There is, we postulate, a unity between nature's processes and the working of the human mind. The address given this year by the President of the British Association shows how extraordinarily fruitful this assumption has proved to be. But, when we consider the vast domains of science which still remain to be explored, we must grant that the rationality of the universe remains a postulate of reasonable faith. As we pass from science to philosophy and religion we have to assume the existence of a universal mind in order to bind together the sequences of phenomena which science observes and describes. Then, as the basis of religious faith, we further assume that the values which we instinctively deem supreme, express the quality of this mind to whom all natural process is due. We thus assert that goodness, beauty and truth are not private values of humanity. Just as there is a unity between the human mind and the processes of nature—a unity which makes science possible—so there is, we maintain, a unity between the moral and esthetic judgments of the human spirit and the God to whom that spirit owes its creation. Alike through the processes of nature and through the values which He has thus revealed, God reveals Himself. Man, we must believe, fulfils his destiny by loyalty to this revelation. The man of science shows such loyalty in his pursuit of truth—a pursuit often followed with an ardor and devotion which are essentially religious. The religious philosopher, the theologian at his best, serves God as he seeks to show that man's existence would be

irrational were not eternal life the reward and goal of earth's struggles. And every religious man gives similar service as he tries so to mould his life in obedience to the divine will that he finds spiritual peace. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," is one of the most pregnant of the Master's sayings. It is a fact that, by loyalty to the highest ideals implanted within us, we experience the certainty that nothing can separate us from the love of God which was in Christ Jesus.

In putting these considerations before you I have drawn no fanciful picture of the parallelism between religion and science. The different processes of the human mind, thought, will and feeling cannot be decisively sundered. As a consequence, the search for truth made by men of science has in our own time profoundly affected our religious outlook. Science has not merely created a new cosmogony against which, as a background, religion must be set. But as the character of its postulates and the extent of its limitations have become more clear science has given us a new conception of what we mean by reasonable faith. In so doing, it has strikingly altered the way in which we approach religion. Some old modes of argument and their attendant dogmas have rapidly become obsolete. A great gulf has opened between constructive and merely defensive types of theology. Among religious communions there is, in consequence, much confusion, some bitterness, fear of change combined with recognition of its necessity. The direct influence of science and its more obvious triumphs are known to all. The earth is not the center of the universe; its age must be measured by hundreds of millions of years; man upon it is the derivative of lower forms of life. No orthodox theologian, in classical or medieval times, held or would have dared to assert such facts. Henceforth they must find their place in any dogmatic scheme of faith. But there is more to be said. The indirect influence of scientific method, its patient induction,



its readiness to admit divergent conceptual representations of observed facts, its absence of exaggeration, its hostility to evasive language, and, above all, its abhorrence of argument which pretends to be free, but is pledged to reach assigned conclusions—this influence has not yet made itself fully felt. Theological thought, which claims to be scientific and is still widely accepted, preserves bad traditions. The work of the best contemporary theologians is free from blame. But to anyone familiar with the scrupulous honesty of modern scientific research the dogmatic inconsequence of much current religious apologetic is painful. For this reason young men and women who have had a scientific training at our universities often complain bitterly that they cannot get adequate religious teaching. They are by no means insensible of the importance and value of religion. Often they are profoundly attracted no less by the teachings of Christ than by His character. They have no more desire for undogmatic religion than for hazy science. But they demand that religious dogmas shall be taught with the same frankness, the same readiness to admit progress through change, the same absence of elaborate and unnecessary complication, as they are accustomed to get in scientific instruction. Especially do they resent the use of archaic language which they suspect, not always unjustly, to be used as a cloak beneath which awkward problems are concealed. As the influence of the methods of scientific investigation increases, the dissatisfaction to which I have alluded will spread. There is only one way in which accredited religious teachers can overcome it. They must use scientific method. They must avoid, whatever the cost, the snare of obscurantism.

At the present time we suffer from what I feel forced to regard as an unfortunate development in the religious history of England. A century ago the dominant type of English religion was evangelical. It laid fundamental stress on spiritual illumination, on the witness to Christ



of the Divine Spirit working in men as they seek to know God. The language used had at times the over-emphasis which is common in devotional literature. But men spoke of realities which they had experienced. That their convictions were genuine their good works abundantly showed. Their faith was a power. Unfortunately, it was joined to a cosmology which was fated to be destroyed by the progress of science. The ravages made in their scheme by geology were already ominous in the year 1823. The faith, it was felt, was in danger. Wisdom pointed to the acceptance of new scientific truths. But it is given to but few to "greet the unseen with a cheer." So the Tractarians, the religious reformers who then arose, men of piety and ability, turned to the past for safety. They resuscitated Catholicism, a vast elaboration of Christ's teaching, derived from many sources during the decline of classical civilization, and redeveloped on the basis of Aristotle's philosophy during the middle ages. Their action was a jump out of the frying pan into the fire, for the system which they embraced not only contained the cosmology now repudiated by educated men, but was also a synthesis of religious ideas of pagan origin combined with philosophic concepts now obsolete. English religion is still struggling with this burden, and, as I see the matter, no healthy reconciliation between science and organized Christianity is possible until it is cast aside. Let us admit that the Oxford movement has done good in adding beauty to worship. Among many clergy whom it influenced it produced a high standard of devotion and hard work. But in the background, ever more definite, is a conflict of ideas. When that conflict is over a new phase of English religion will begin. As I have indicated, I believe that we shall regain the evangelicalism of men like Wesley and Simeon, but it will be combined with that outlook on the world which modern science has constructed.

Men of science can do much to help the community

during the period of transition through which we are now passing. Their reverence for truth can be made an inspiration of especial value to pious souls. Among men of science there is the moral austerity without which the finest intellectual work is seldom, if ever, achieved. During the last generation, moreover, they have shown a steadily increasing sympathy with religion, an enhanced appreciation of the unique power of Christianity, at its best, to serve the human race, to foster spiritual progress while preserving spiritual freedom. I would urge all men of science whom my words may reach to take every opportunity to set forth their religious ideals, to show how, in their own minds, Christianity and science interact. Personally, I think it unreasonable to demand that their language should be orthodox. The great master of my thinking is Hort, the only theologian of the nineteenth century who began with a thorough scientific training. And Hort said: Progress in theology must come "by perilous use and perilous reform." The religious sincerity of able men with trained minds is of value in itself. And, I am convinced, the essentials of Christianity will survive by their own inherent strength. A faith worth having needs no artificial protection. Individually each one of us may make mistakes: in the end truth will prevail through honest argument.

The great American divine, Phillips Brooks, laid down the principle to which all who speak of religion should be loyal. "Say nothing which you do not believe to be true because you think it may be helpful. Keep back nothing which you know to be true because you think it may be harmful." Already it is becoming more usual to ask laymen of eminence to speak on religious topics, to preach in places of worship. I eagerly desire the custom to spread. In the religious life of the nation we need all the contributions that religious men can make, and not least at the present time do we need the religious witness of men of science.



## Part IV

MIRACLES; THE VIRGIN BIRTH AND  
THE BODILY RESURRECTION





## A. MIRACLES IN GENERAL

### A FAMOUS EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ATTACK ON MIRACLES<sup>1</sup>

. . . Nothing is esteemed a miracle, if it ever happen in the common course of nature. It is no miracle that a man, seemingly in good health, should die on a sudden; because such a kind of death, though more unusual than any other, has yet been frequently observed to happen. But it is a miracle, that a dead man should come to life; because that has never been observed in any age or country. There must, therefore, be a uniform experience against every miraculous event, otherwise the event would not merit that appellation. And as a uniform experience amounts to a proof, there is here a direct and full *proof* from the nature of the fact, against the existence of any miracle; nor can such a proof be destroyed, or the miracle be rendered credible, but by an opposite proof, which is superior.

The plain consequence is (and it is a general maxim worthy of our attention) "that no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind, that its falsehood would be more miraculous, than the fact, which it endeavors to establish; and even in that case there is a mutual destruction of arguments, and the superior only gives us an assurance suitable to that degree of force, which remains, after deducting the inferior." When anyone tells me, that he saw a dead man restored to life, I immediately consider with myself, whether it be more probable, that this person should either deceive or be deceived, or that the fact, which he

<sup>1</sup> By David Hume. Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding.  
D. 115-16.

relates, should really have happened. I weigh the one miracle against the other; and according to the superiority, which I discover, I pronounce my decision, and always reject the greater miracle. If the falsehood of his testimony would be more miraculous, than the event which he relates; then, and not till then, can he pretend to command my belief or opinion.

### A SIMILAR MODERN CONTENTION <sup>1</sup>

It seems clear that completely isolated exceptions to the laws of nature could not be adequately established by the kind of historical evidence to which the believers in such suspensions appeal, even if that evidence were far stronger than it is.

### MIRACLES NOT ESSENTIAL TO CHRISTIANITY <sup>2</sup>

I conclude, therefore, that the fate of Jesus and His gospel is in no way bound up with the fate of miracle. It is evident, even if naturalism is to control men's views of all history, that the really great things in Christ and His gospel abide. His teaching abides, His character is safe, His spiritual leadership is unquestioned. He is still our Prophet, Priest, and King. His risen and glorified life in God remains attested by the witness of life. Only the fringe of His evangelical career is torn away. We lose the stilling of the storm, the walking on the sea, the feeding of the multitudes, the raising of the widow's only son and the dead Lazarus. We lose something, no doubt, and the loss, if it should become inevitable, will be painful to many. But even here there is evidence of the greatness of our Lord. That He wrought wonders

<sup>1</sup> By Dean Rashdall, *quoted in* Lake, *Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*. p. 268-9.

<sup>2</sup> By George A. Gordon. *Religion and Miracle*. p. 130-1.

upon the physical life of men is beyond dispute. That He gained access to the souls of the plain people by His marvelous power as the healer of physical distress is not open to question. That he took the imagination of the people captive is attested by the tradition of wonders that came to invest His career. To all serious minds, part of the evidence of the power of Jesus Christ will always be the epic of miracle inbedded in His career. How great that epic is, it would be difficult to say, of what divine things it is the reflection, men may one day become noble enough to discover.



## B. THE VIRGIN BIRTH,

### WHY WE BELIEVE IN THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF CHRIST<sup>2</sup>

The reason your attention is called to this subject is because at present it is the focal point of the enemy's attack against Christianity. Contemporary conditions in the world make certain subjects of defense more urgent at one time than another, and this is the particular subject for today. Therefore we say:

1. *We believe in the virgin birth of Christ because we believe the Bible to be true, that is to say, credible in its statements of fact.*

But some one may say, is not that begging the question? How do we know the Bible to be credible in its statements of fact? The reply to this was given on another occasion, but we may here say that Christianity, which is synonymous with the Bible, is a historic religion, the only religion in the world of which that may be said in the same sense. Christianity is based on historic evidence. What the Apostle John says of its Divine Founder may be said of it, "that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled" (I John 1:1). In other words, any one sufficiently interested may ascertain for himself how the Christian church originated, whether Jesus Christ arose from the dead and whether, such being the case, He ever authenticated the Bible which was before His day.

As a matter of fact, the historic evidence of Christianity on which the faith of our fathers rested is as

<sup>1</sup> See also "Mr. Bryan on the Five Points." p. 32-9.

<sup>2</sup> By James M. Gray, D.D. A Bible conference address. Reprinted by permission of the author and holder of the copyright.



strong and valuable today as it was in their day. Were all our fathers fools? Had they no interest in investigating this question, and being nearer its source did they not have opportunities for doing it? Or will it be said that they were lacking the intelligence?

Moreover, there is evidence for the credibility of the Bible now possessed which was denied our fathers. Evidence from archæological research and from the contemporary history of the world. Professor Robert Dick Wilson, of Princeton, to whom reference was made on the other occasion referred to, is almost a living embodiment of this evidence, whose forty-five years given to the subject, and whose phenomenal acquaintance with original sources gives potency to his declaration that no man living knows enough to assail the truth of the Old Testament. But if the Old Testament be true there can be no question about the New Testament. And yet the evidence for the New Testament is quite independent of that for the Old, and so strong and clear that if it be rejected, then facts have lost their value and no human testimony can be accepted for any historical event of an antiquity anywhere approaching the apostolic age.

2. *We believe in the virgin birth of Christ because the Bible, credible as to its statements of fact, contains a statement of that fact.* Indeed it contains the statement twice over, and from two sources and two different points of view. Familiar as you may be with those statements it is pertinent to repeat them again. The first is the annunciation to Joseph in Matthew 1:18-25:

Now the birth of Jesus was on this wise. When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins

Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

The second is the annunciation to Mary in Luke 1: 26-35:

And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God.

And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

3. *We believe in the virgin birth of Christ because these statements of fact as to the authenticity or genuineness, have never been questioned from the beginning.*

We do not say the fact itself has never been questioned, for if such were not the case there would be no need for this defense, but the authenticity or genuineness of the record of the fact is unimpeached.

We mean by that that no copy of the Gospel of Matthew and no copy of the Gospel of Luke has ever omitted it. There are thousands upon thousands of manuscripts, and also many versions of the New Testament

carrying us back to the middle of the second century of the Christian era, but every one of them contains, and always contained, these records of the virgin birth just as we have them in our English Bible today.

Furthermore, the trustworthiness as a historian of at least one of the two writers, Luke, is now placed beyond a reasonable doubt by contemporary evidence. The authority who has done this is Sir William Ramsay, D.C.L., in his "St. Paul, the Traveler," but especially in his later work, "The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament."

I have not the time to tell the story of this remarkable scholar or to dwell on his qualifications for such a task. His works speak for themselves, however, and no unprejudiced mind can consider the evidence he presents as to the trustworthiness of Luke, without sharing in his judgment that you may press the words of that evangelist far beyond those of any secular historian of the period, and find that they stand the keenest scrutiny and the hardest treatment, provided always that the critic knows the subject on which he is discoursing, and that he does not go beyond the limits of science and justice in what he says.

4. *We believe in the virgin birth of Christ because the predictions in the Old Testament prepare us to expect a miracle of some kind at His birth.*

Take, as an example, what is known as the "protevangeli-um," the first promise of a Redeemer from sin found in the Bible. It is God's penalty pronounced on the serpent, Satan's representative in the temptation where He says: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). Evangelical expositors of all the centuries have taught that the word "seed" in this case is not to be taken generally, or collectively for the generation of mankind, but "determinately and individually," as one of them expresses it, for that one seed, which is Christ (Gal. 3:16). So the woman is not to be understood with relation to man, but

particularly to that sex from which alone and immediately that seed should come.

And this first evangelical promise is followed by the prediction of the prophet Jeremiah millenniums afterward. At chapter 31:22, he is pleading with backsliding Judah in the name of Jehovah and encouraging her to return to her first love with a promise of the Messiah, in these words:

For the LORD hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man.

That new creation of a man is new indeed, because thus wrought in a woman only, without a man, "a woman shall compass (enclose) a man."

"This interpretation of the prophet is ancient, literal and clear," affirms the once Lord Bishop of Chester, John Pearson, D.D., in his classic "Exposition of the Apostles' Creed." "Whatsoever the Jews have invented to elude it," he goes on to say, "is frivolous and forced." If they make it anything else than a miraculous conception, they not only wrest the Scripture, but contradict the former part of the promise which makes the creation to be something *new*, not something easy to perform, not something which is often done. Bishop Pearson quotes the ancient rabbis as acknowledging this sense of the passage, and applying the words definitely to the Messiah.

But if to any this prophecy of Jeremiah seems obscure, what of that of the prophet Isaiah (7:14) which is cited by Matthew in the chapter before quoted? His words in encouragement to Judah, are:

Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

The Jews have tried to avoid the force of this Scripture by saying that the Hebrew word does not really mean a virgin, and that in any event it found fulfilment in the birth of Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, to which latter wicked king the promise was originally given.



Unfortunately for this argument, however, it did not see the light until after the Gospels of Matthew and Luke had been given to the world. Prior to that time, the Jews had accepted the ordinary meaning of the word and had so translated it into the Septuagint Version, for example, two or three hundred years before Christ was born. Moreover, as to Hezekiah, while he was indeed the son of Ahaz, yet the latter "reigned but sixteen years in Jerusalem" (2 Kings 16:2), while Hezekiah who succeeded him, "was twenty and five years old when he began to reign" (2 Kings 18:2). He, therefore, was born several years before Ahaz was king and consequently could not have been conceived when this promised sign was given.

The Jews plainly show by these blunders that so far as they had any knowledge, the promise was not fulfilled till Jesus came. And thus they cannot successfully deny that it belonged to Him, as indeed some of their ancient rabbis have confessed.

5. *We believe in the virgin birth of Christ because other and later declarations of the New Testament confirm it.*

Compare, for example, the remarkable testimony of the Apostle John in the first chapter of his Gospel, verses 1 and 14.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

Here the very same being who is declared to be God is also declared to have become incarnate. How could this have been accomplished without a biological miracle of some kind, and if such were the case, why not that miracle of which Matthew and Luke speak?

And take again, Paul's words in his letter to the Philippians (2:5-7):

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took



upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.

Here the very same being who was in the form of God and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, took upon Him the likeness of men. How could this have been accomplished without a biological miracle of some kind, and if such were the case, why not that miracle of which Matthew and Luke speak?

To these very particular passages, add some of those perhaps not so well known. Paul's words to the church at Galatia, for example:

But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, *made of a woman*, made under the law.—Gal. 4:4.

Or those of the inspired writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews:

For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but *he took on him* the seed of Abraham.—Heb. 2:16.

Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice an offering thou wouldest not, but a *body thou hast prepared me*.—Heb. 10:5.

The italicized words in these Scriptures are not descriptive of the birth of an ordinary being. Such an one is not "made of a woman" who "knew not a man," as Mary said. Nor does He "take on him" the human nature, but is taken on by that nature. And surely such an one is not described in a pre-existent state, covenanting with His Creator concerning the particular purpose for which He is coming into the world and concerning the human body being prepared for Him in which to execute it! Is there anything unreasonable about a virgin birth in such a case as this?

6. *We believe in the virgin birth of Christ because His unique life and character as recorded in the Gospels perfectly harmonize with and corroborate the miracle.*

To dwell only upon a single feature of His life and character, consider His sinlessness. Was He not the only being who could challenge His contemporaries with the

question, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" Did not His enemies as well as His friends, testify to His sinlessness? Did not their criticisms fall upon Him for His virtues rather than His faults? Did not Judas as well as Pilate declare that he found no fault in Him and confess that he had "betrayed innocent blood?"

It is true, however, that the strongest testimony to the sinlessness of Jesus is Himself. And this not so much in what He said or did as in what He did not say or do. "The pores of the soul are always open," said Canon Liddon, "instinctively and unconsciously whether a man will or whether he will not, the insignificance or the greatness of his inner life reveals itself." That is to say, if Jesus had been aware of sin in His soul it must have shown itself somewhere in His life or speech. But was this ever true?

What then shall we say to these things? Granted such a character, is not a miraculous birth not only reasonable, but is it not a necessary conclusion in such a case? Otherwise could Jesus have been born without sin any more than we?

## II

I pause at this point to consider one or two of the principal objections that are raised against the virgin birth of Christ.

1. It is said, for example, that "virgin birth," referring to it in general terms, is traditional, that there have been many so-called "virgin births." Christians have come to believe in the virgin birth of Christ the objector would affirm, not because it is a historical fact, but because custom or usage has transmitted the idea, as an idea, from generation to generation.

To believe in virgin birth as an explanation of great personality, [says one such objector], is one of the familiar ways in which the ancient world was accustomed to account for unusual superiority. According to the records of other faiths, Buddha, Zoroaster and LaoTse were all supernaturally born. That is to

say, when a personality rose so high that men adored him, the ancient world attributed his superiority to some special divine influence in his generation, and they commonly phrased their faith in terms of miraculous birth.

This is reverting to what the infidels, Porphyry and Celsus, were wont to say in the second and third centuries of the Christian era. They compared the accounts of the life and actions of Christ with the stories in the Greek and Roman mythologies and placed those accounts in the catalog of the pagan heroes and demi-gods. The reply to this objection is culmulative:

(1) We admit the existence of such traditions, but they are explained just as similar traditions are explained concerning the creation, the fall of man and the deluge. This is to say, they are pagan echoes of the original promise in Eden concerning the seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent's head. Thus they strengthen rather than weaken the claim of the virgin birth of Christ.

Or, to express it in another way, quoting a personal letter of a friend: "The earliest revelations in the race demanded such a final divine revelation as that which Jehovah gave us in the person of His son. The knowledge of this early revelation was so widespread in the race that men embodied it in their various thoughts of God by whatever names they called Him. These imperfect statements of the natural religions gave proof that such a revelation was necessary to the human heart and in accordance with the religious convictions of all men. These dark gropings after God coming to expression in an incarnation in one form or another, demanded a perfect expression at some time and somewhere. They are proofs, therefore, that such a final and perfect revelation would be made. And that it was made in Jesus Christ, we rejoice to believe."

(2) But in the second place, it should be borne in mind that these traditions do not correspond with Luke's recital of the conception of the Virgin Mary by the Holy

Ghost. They are, rather, representations of gods coming down to earth and consorting with humankind in ways at once revolting and ridiculous. As an English author puts it, "The alleged virgin births are not virgin births at all, but angelic fornications which brought the old world to ruin (Gen. 6: 2, 4) and formed the basis of all heathen mythology." The thought is elaborated in a well-known volume of Professor James Orr, D.D. of Glasgow, on "The Virgin Birth of Christ," while the chapter in Genesis showing the connection of the "sons of God" therein mentioned, with the fallen heroes of mythology has been treated somewhat at length in my own book, "Spiritism and the Fallen Angels."

(3) We should remember also that the virgin birth of Christ was published in the synoptic Gospels within thirty-five years after the resurrection of Christ and in the very place and among the very people where and among whom, the event itself was said to have occurred. Is there any parallel to that in the so-called incarnations of the founders of other religions? Are they thus historically verified? Is it not true, rather, that such stories of Buddha as at all resemble those of Christ arose long after Buddha's death? Are there any Buddhist writings for more than two or three hundred years after his decease that make any claim of a virgin birth for him? Dr. Orr's testimony as to this is very clear, and similar testimony is found in another modern work, Dr. Robert E. Speer's, "The Light of the World."

(4) Finally, in the case of Jesus, men did not wait, nor did angels wait, until His "personality rose high" before they adored Him. On the contrary they adored Him while He was yet a babe lying in the manger. Or have we forgotten or do we make no account of the angel's song, and the visit of the shepherds and the journey of the wise men from the east? And do we find no argument in the prophesying of Simeon and Anna, or in the testimony of Elizabeth, Mary's cousin, who acknowl-



edged her, even before the birth of Jesus, as "the mother of my Lord?" Let us refresh our minds with the record of these things by reading Matthew 2: 1-10, Luke 1: 41-3 and Luke 2: 8-38.

2. It is said that the virgin birth of Christ is unscientific, that there is nothing analogous to it in the organic world, just as if that were not an argument in its favor rather than against it! Such an objection recoils upon him who puts it forth, for who could assume that the virgin birth of Christ was natural and not supernatural? Such an objection bears equally against the bodily resurrection of Christ and any other miraculous event in His earthly history. And we may go back farther still, for it bears equally against the creation of Adam out of the dust of the ground and of Eve out of the side of Adam. In other words, when we exclude the virgin birth of Christ because of its miraculous nature, we are bound to go further and exclude the idea of the miraculous altogether. And indeed, this is precisely what the destructive critics most desire to do.

But, furthermore in this connection let it be kept in mind, that there is only one branch of science that is entitled to raise a question about the virgin birth, and that is the science of biology. But ask biology whether it is not possible for a human individual to begin his organic existence according to the law of agamogenesis instead of gamogenesis, by some other process that is, than that which we know as marriage, and biology will be obliged to answer, Yes. And the biologist is thus obliged to answer whether he is a creationist or an evolutionist, whether he believes the record in Genesis or whether he does not. It is impossible to enlarge upon this thought in a brief compass, but any one wishing to see it carried further is recommended to read W. D. Thompson's "The Christian Miracles and the Conclusions of Science," chapter 13 (T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh).



## III

Let us pass from the objections to the virgin birth of Christ to consider what may be called an *evasion* of it as a Christian dogma.

Quoting Professor Robert Alexander Webb, of the Kentucky Presbyterian Seminary, "We are told by some that the dogma of the virgin birth of Christ is useless, Christianity is not affected by it whether true or false, it is a subject only for academic debate."

The person who can say this is an enigma. Either he is ignorant of what the Bible really teaches on the subject, or else he is seriously defective in his reasoning powers. To deny that the Bible is true or worthy of credit is an intelligible proposition; but to admit that it is and deny that the dogma of the virgin birth of Christ is essential to the religion it reveals, is well-nigh incomprehensible as a supposedly logical statement.

1. *It is essential to the credibility of the Bible itself.* Discredit the Bible at this point and the way is open to discredit it at any point. If Moses, and Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Matthew, and Luke, and John and Paul are wrong here, why not wrong anywhere that the human fancy may surmise? Discredit the Bible here, and it is opening a crevice in the dyke that never can be closed until the flood of unbelief sweeps away the whole fabric of Christianity.

2. *It is essential to the personality of Christ.* He is "Immanuel," God with us. He is the God-man, truly God and truly man, two natures in the one person. The Bible clearly reveals this, and the doctrine of an atonement makes it absolutely necessary. If He were not God and at the same time man, how could He suffer and die as the sinner's substitute? And if He were not man and at the same time God, how could His sufferings and death avail to take away sin? And yet how could this twofold nature be predicated of Him without a biological miracle

of some kind? In other words, how could there be an incarnation of the Godhead without a virgin birth?

3. *It is essential to His sinlessness and hence His Saviourhood.* This thought is not quite the same as the preceding, but nearly so. Had Christ descended from Adam by natural generation as all the rest of us have done, would He not have been a sinner as well as we? And if a sinner, would He not have required a Saviour as well as we? But where could His Saviour have been found, and by the same token, where could your Saviour have been found, or mine?

But suffer a caution here. Recently an evangelical teacher was reported to have said:

Only those who believe in Christ as God, in His virgin birth and in His resurrection—an irreducible minimum of Christian faith—will go to heaven, and those who deny any or all of these tenets will be lost and go to hell.

Is there not an opportunity for a distinction in this matter? Is the non-belief of any dogma precisely the same as its denial or rejection? For example, may not a child accept Jesus Christ by faith and be saved, without knowing about the virgin birth? If indeed the dogma should be presented to him as part of the divine revelation so that it were understood, and he should then deny it or reject it, the situation would be different. But otherwise are we not at liberty to say that however essential to Christianity the dogma of the virgin birth may be, it is not equally essential to individual salvation? A perfect, consistent, all-around statement of what constitutes the Christian faith is one thing and the answer to "What must I do to be saved?" is another thing.

As a test, this question was put to a dozen intelligent and devoted Christians not very long ago. Some of them were Bible students above the average, and two or three were qualified theologians. They were cautious in replying, as became so serious a subject, but they were unanimous in saying that while Jesus Christ "was conceived of

the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," yet it was still possible to say as Paul said to the inquiring jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). We should be very thankful for this. We should not minimize, much less deny, the doctrine of the virgin birth of Christ. We cannot do it, indeed, and be true to Him and to the Christian faith. But we should not make it harder for an enquiring soul to enter the kingdom of God than God Himself has done.

I read God's Word and find  
Great truths which far transcend my mind;  
And little do I know beside  
Of that so high, so deep and wide.  
This is my best theology,  
I know the Saviour died for me.  
—GEORGE W. BETHUNE.

### THE VIRGIN BIRTH ESSENTIAL<sup>1</sup>

Men have always and everywhere judged that a supernatural man, doing a supernatural work, must needs have sprung from a supernatural source. If there had been nothing extraordinary in the coming of the Savior into the world, a discordant note would have been struck at this point in the "heterosoteric" Christianity of the New Testament, which would have thrown it in all its elements out of tune. To it, it would have been unnatural if the birth of the Savior had been natural, just because it itself in none of its elements is natural, but is everywhere and through all its structure, not, indeed, unnatural or contra-natural, but distinctively supernatural.

. . . But something more than sinlessness in this subjective sense was requisite for the redemption up to which the incarnation leads. Assuredly no one, resting for himself under the curse of sin, could atone for the sin of others; no one owing the law its extreme penalty for himself could pay this penalty for others. And cer-

<sup>1</sup> By Professor B. B. Warfield. *American Journal of Theology*. 10: 25-9. January, 1906.

tainly in the Christianity of the New Testament every natural member of the race of Adam rests under the curse of Adam's sin, and is held under the penalty that hangs over it. If the Son of God came into the world therefore . . . specifically in order to save sinners, it was imperatively necessary that he should become incarnate after a fashion which would leave him standing, so far as his own responsibility is concerned, outside that fatal entail of sin in which the whole natural race of Adam is involved. And that is as much as to say that the redemptive work of the Son of God depends upon his supernatural birth.

### THE VIRGIN BIRTH NOT ESSENTIAL <sup>1</sup>

Paul shows no knowledge of miraculous circumstances connected with the birth of his Lord. For him the resurrection was the demonstration of the Lordship of Jesus (Rom. 1:4). Paul regarded Jesus simply as according to the flesh "of the seed of David" (Rom. 1:3; 9:5), and as found in "fashion as a man" (Phil. 2:8). When in Galatians (4:4) he says, "God sent forth His Son, *made of a woman*, made under the law," there is no more reason to think he refers to a miraculous conception than that such a reference was in mind in Job 14:1, "man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble."

The Johannine writings show equally little consciousness of any miraculous circumstances connected with the birth of Jesus. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" sets forth a most exalted conception of Jesus, but if the early chapters of Matthew and Luke had by accident been lost, as the last verses of Mark have been, John would afford no suggestion of a virgin birth. It is equally true that, having those early chapters of Matthew and Luke, we have no ground for supposing that they

<sup>1</sup> By Professor Rush Rhees, Rochester Theological Seminary. *American Journal of Theology*. 10: 18-20. January, 1906.

had any influence in the development of Johannine doctrine. For the strongest statement of the incarnation is put forth as a truth demonstrated to the disciples by their daily experience with their Master, rather than by miracle exhibited in His birth: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and *we beheld His glory*—glory as of an only begotten from a Father—full of grace and truth" (John 1:14; cf. I John 1:1 f.).

The epistle to the Hebrews dwells much on the doctrine of the incarnation, and argues therefrom the superiority of the new revelation to that which preceded it, but it is difficult to think that the writer of that epistle could have been influenced by any tradition concerning a virgin birth when he wrote: "For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made in all points like unto His brethren" (Heb. 2:16).

It is noteworthy also that the author of the second gospel gave no hint of a virgin birth, and that the first and third gospels are equally free from any influence by that tradition after the first chapter of Matthew and the first chapter of Luke—excepting the reference to Mary as Joseph's "espoused wife" in Luke 2:5, and the phrase "as was supposed" at the beginning of the genealogy in Luke 3:23. So complete is this freedom from influence by the virgin birth tradition that even in the story of the visit to the temple (Luke 2:48) Mary reproaches Jesus, saying, "Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing;" while in Matthew, the Nazarenes, astonished at the renown which had come to their fellow-townsmen, asked, "Is not this the carpenter's son, and is not his mother called Mary?" (Matt. 13:55).

These facts do not disprove the virgin birth, but they do show clearly that that tradition exercised no influence over the thought and teaching of the writers of our New Testament—outside of the chapters in Matthew and Luke



in which the tradition is preserved to us. Consequently it cannot be regarded as essential to apostolic thinking.

The question, "Is the virgin birth essential to Christianity?" must be answered in the negative also, if in this question we mean by Christianity the most exalted Christology. This consideration is really a corollary of the preceding one, for in Paul and the Johannine writings we find as high a doctrine of the person of Christ as in later ecclesiastical speculation, even though the later speculative formulas are lacking. The pre-existence of Christ is clearly taught in Paul and John (I Cor. 8:6; Phil. 2:6-10; Col. 1:15-19; John 1:1-14), who, as has been shown, betray no knowledge of a virgin birth. The sinlessness of Christ is also an apostolic doctrine (2 Cor. 5:21; John 3:46; 1 John 3:5; cf. 1 Pet. 2:22), but the apostolic writings which most clearly assert the sinlessness betray no knowledge of a virgin birth. Yet pre-existence and sinlessness are two attributes which are most frequently regarded as rendering essential to Christian thinking the doctrine of the virgin birth. The sinlessness of Jesus does not appear less marvelous if He had no human father, for human heredity passes as fully from the mother as from the father. A virgin birth would not, therefore, free Jesus from full and vital connection with the past of sinful humanity. If His sinlessness signifies that He was thus detached from the common inheritance, the detachment involves the supernatural quite as much if He had no human father, as if He were in fact "the carpenter's son."

So also the mystery of the pre-existence is not lightened by the doctrine of the virgin birth. The genesis of a human soul is in itself so deep a mystery that speculation concerning it is baffled in the case of each everyday birth among us. Pre-existence for Jesus can be inferred only from His own self-disclosures in life and teaching. A virgin birth would not of itself indicate such pre-existence, nor would a natural conception make

such pre-existence less credible—as appears from the frequency with which the Platonic doctrine of general human pre-existence has been advocated.

The person of Christ is a subject filled with highest mystery and holiest significance. For many of us a virgin birth seems an altogether suitable introduction of such a personality into our human fellowship. But, however sacred the associations which cling for us to that tradition, in simple candor it must be confessed that it contains nothing essential to the most exalted Christology.

### THE VIRGIN BIRTH HISTORICALLY DOUBTFUL<sup>1</sup>

. . . No amount of harmonistic ingenuity has ever adjusted Matthew's picture of Bethlehem as the home of Jesus' parents, whither they are prevented from returning after the flight into Egypt, to Luke's, where Nazareth is their home, and the census of Quirinius is the occasion of their visit to Bethlehem. As regards all the details of the narratives, their mutual incompatibilities exclude dependence on their details, to say nothing of the highly legendary character of the narratives themselves, especially Matthew's, in their individual contents.

[Footnote] It does not imply *a priori* rejection of the supernatural to class the star which "goes before" the magi and "stands over" the place of the nativity with lights that never were on sea or land. The paraphernalia of visions and angels in both accounts (Luke 1:26, "the angel Gabriel") belong to the realm of religious fiction, abundantly illustrated in contemporary uncanonical literature, progressively diminishing as we approach contemporary records. . . .

. . . The question to decide is whether historically the belated appearance of the idea in Matthew and Luke is better accounted for by such gradual infiltration of the Pauline idea [that all Christians as the body of Christ are, like Isaac, spiritually born] after the fall of Jeru-

<sup>1</sup> By Professor B. W. Bacon, Yale. *American Journal of Theology*, 10: 7, 9-10. January, 1906.

saalem, when even the Palestinian church became Greek-speaking and predominantly Pauline in sentiment; or whether we are to account for it with Sanday by some long-deferred confession of the virgin mother.

The difficulties which confront the latter explanation are certainly the greater, from the historian's point of view. The gospels are explicit in their representation that the attitude of Jesus' mother and brethren was at the outset hostile to His work (Mark 3:21, 31), and skeptical as to His messianic claims (John 7:5). Without the heavenly message to Mary a supernatural birth would be a meaningless prodigy of biology. With it, such hostility and skepticism are hard to conceive; and, even granting the possibility, what could account for her suppression of the facts at the period of awakening faith in the days when Peter was rallying the disciples with the word of resurrection?

The most unbiased judgment we can give the documents is unfavorable to their early origin or credibility. Their mutual contradictions and legendary features exclude the possibility of accuracy in detail; the bare point of agreement in respect to the supernatural birth in Bethlehem seems, indeed, to have been "brought forward by the conflict with heresy," but not out of memories of the virgin. It is more credibly derived from the Pauline doctrine of a spiritual birth of believers as the collective Christ, the seed of Abraham, after the manner of Isaac, "by a word of promise." Logically, the idea of the virgin birth would seem to be a hybrid, if not a monstrosity. Historically, it reflects the spirit of the post-apostolic age, involving compromise, or amalgamation, between the primitive doctrine, of messiahship by descent from David, and the Hellenistic, of messiahship by incarnation after pre-existence, represented in the Wisdom doctrine of Paul and the Logos doctrine of the fourth evangelist. The doctrine of the supernatural birth has the merits of neither, because it seeks to combine the claims of both.

THE VIRGIN BIRTH AS A SLUR ON HUMAN NATURE AND HUMAN LOVE <sup>1</sup>

Supported by Scripture in so slight a way as this tradition is, one must look elsewhere for explanation of its hold upon Christian feeling. A theory of human nature lies back of it. This theory is that human nature is depraved, and that its natural issue is necessarily depraved. In men and women there is nothing good. When they become husband and wife, father and mother, that which is born of them partakes of their depravity. From human parents there cannot come by ordinary generation a perfect child. Jesus was a perfect child; therefore, He could not have come into the world by ordinary generation.

This argument has been strengthened through many generations of Christian history by ascetic feeling. Men and women have been ashamed of their humanity, they have looked upon their natural impulses as a humiliation, they have regarded family life as a concession to the animal in their natures; they have considered the unmarried state as higher than the married, as indeed the only condition compatible with moral purity. A celibate priesthood has set the example to this way of thinking. An inveterate prejudice has thus arisen against the honor of wedded love and natural human parenthood.

Against both these positions it is impossible too strongly to protest. Human nature is not a depraved thing; it has been outraged; it is outraged; but in spite of outrage it remains higher than all else that we know except its own ideals. It is our witness for God, our chief witness, and the less we see of its inherent honor, the less we see of Him. Human beings are capable of love, and wherever love exists, character is cleansed and elevated. The love of a man for a woman and the love

<sup>1</sup> By George A. Gordon. *Religion and Miracle*, p. 98-105. Reprinted by permission of the author and holder of the copyright.

of a woman for a man, under the sanction of law, and in the form of marriage, is the heart of all that is best in the life of the race. . . . Love lives in natural impulses and processes, and changes their character. Thus it is that children in worthy human homes are born of the Spirit. By the strength of the Holy Ghost they began to be; by His strength they were brought into the world. In this sense it is forever true that Jesus was conceived of the Holy Ghost while born of His mother and her honorable husband.

The miracle at the beginning of the life of Jesus does not, therefore, fall in with the thoughts and experiences of reasonable Christians today. The nearer to Christ that men and women in their homes come, the less acceptable becomes that miracle, the less compatible with their own life and hope. Besides, it strikes them as an awkward miracle. The influence of the father upon the child is slight compared with the influence of the mother. The child is literally bone of her bone, and flesh of her flesh; indeed, all the world acknowledges the predominance, the sovereignty of the mother. If, therefore, the Creative Spirit is unable to neutralize the influence of the father in so far as it is malign, how can He overcome the infinitely greater influence of the mother in so far as it is unfortunate? It is this view of the subject that gives to the miracle in question the appearance of awkwardness and futility.

For myself, as I stand among the wise men by the manger in Bethlehem, I forget to raise the question even in thought, how this child came to be; with the wise men, I can only open my heart in homage and gifts. If at any less inspired time and place I pass in thought this scene of tender and transcendent loveliness back into its utmost beginnings, I am sure that I behold nothing but all-hallowing, all-transforming love, and in the presence of a mystery too full of God for mortal vision to pierce, I desire, like the prophet of old, to wrap my mantle about my face, and answer the eternal honor that lives here,



and that lives in the process of natural parenthood in all worthy men and women, in silent awe and thankful trust.

## C. THE BODILY RESURRECTION<sup>1</sup>

### THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS<sup>2</sup>

The following are the facts as Christians believe: (1) Jesus died, not in appearance but in reality. (2) His body was buried in a tomb as other corpses are buried. (3) On the morning of the third day He arose from the dead. (4) He appeared repeatedly during forty days to the apostles and other witnesses. (5) Afterward He ascended to the right hand of the Father.

The chief point of emphasis here is the resurrection. This is the crucial point. What followed is easily conceded if this be established. By resurrection it is meant that the body of Jesus was changed from a dead to a living body. It is not necessary to define fully the nature of His resurrection body. It was certainly not in all respects the same as His body prior to the resurrection. It may have been in process of glorification during the period of appearances to the disciples. It was doubtless to become a "spiritual" body, if not already such. It was to be adapted to His spirit as its permanent abode. But for present purposes this point may be left on one side. We insist now chiefly upon this: the grave of Jesus was emptied of its contents. It was no "resurrection" of His spirit merely, which would have been no resurrection at all. What was laid in the grave dead came forth therefrom alive. This and nothing less is the Christian claim.

This supreme fact it is proposed to establish by testimony, the witness of competent and credible men. Mean-

<sup>1</sup> See also "Mr. Bryan on the Five Points," p. 32-9.

<sup>2</sup> By E. Y. Mullins. *Why Is Christianity True?* American Baptist Publishing Society, Philadelphia. Copyright [author]. Reprinted by permission of the author and the publishers.

time, however, we may call it a hypothesis. It can be established in all the ways insisted upon by science in proving hypotheses. It accounts for all the facts. No other hypothesis does this. These facts to be accounted for are as follows: The accounts of the New Testament records, the fact of the moral transformation of the first disciples, and the facts of Christian history since their day. We are not, of course, dealing with mathematics nor with physics. We cannot employ theorems nor apply scalpel and microscope. The Christian origins belong rather to a department of historical science.

Men, of course, claim and have claimed that no amount of evidence can prove a resurrection from the dead. What this means is that they decline to believe the best evidence when it relates to one class of facts. They repudiate evidence valid in all other spheres because of its subject matter. Analyze the contents of the testimony as to the resurrection of Christ and the denial that testimony can prove such a fact becomes absurd. It is a testimony to what? To two facts: First, that a man was dead; second, that a man was alive. Every day in the week the testimony of witnesses establishes both facts. Of course, in this case it is not testimony that one man was first alive and then dead, nor that one man was dead and afterward another man was alive, which no one would dispute, but that the same man was first dead and then alive. The simplicity of the facts of the testimony, merely as facts, however, is as great in the last as in the two former cases.

The following are some of the tests which may be applied to the evidence for alleged historical facts. They are given more fully in Dr. John Kennedy's excellent treatise, "The Resurrection of Jesus Christ." One element of certainty in testimony is that it is from a contemporary who had personal and immediate perception of the facts. Another is that the witness loves the truth. Sir Cornewall Lewis says: "Historical evidence, like judicial evidence, is founded on the evidence of credible

witnesses." He also says the credibility of a witness depends on the four following conditions: "(1) That the fact fell within the reach of his senses. (2) That he observed or attended to it. (3) That he possesses a fair amount of intelligence and memory. (4) That he is free from any sinister or misleading interest; or, if not, that he is a person of veracity." Canon Rawlinson says evidence of the second degree of credibility is that obtained by others directly from eye-witnesses. So also is evidence derived from trustworthy contemporary writings. The cumulative force of evidence should also be recognized. Once more, the validity of evidence in proof of facts must not be determined by "the weight of the consequences that may happen to depend on them."

Consider, first, the evidence of the four Gospels. Each of these gives numerous details as to the resurrection of Christ. The apparent discrepancies as to certain points are a trifle compared with the overwhelming consensus as to the great fact that Christ rose from the dead. The following facts are recorded by all: The death of Jesus on the cross; the request of Joseph of Arimathea, who obtained the body; that it was placed by Joseph in a tomb variously described by the evangelists as "Joseph's own tomb," a "tomb hewn out of a rock," etc. Matthew and Mark state that a great stone was placed in the door of the sepulchre. Matthew and Mark and Luke say that women beheld where Jesus was laid. Matthew records the sealing of the stone and the placing of a guard by chief priests and Pharisees who secured permission from Pilate.

So much for the burial. Then comes the record by all that some women went on the third day at daybreak and found the grave empty. The stone was rolled away. The body was gone. In the various accounts Christ appears to Mary Magdalene; to the women; to Peter; to two disciples walking to Emmaus; to the apostles except Thomas; to the apostles, Thomas being present; to seven of the apostles by the Sea of Galilee; to five hundred

brethren on a mountain in Galilee; to James; to the eleven preceding the ascension. Thus Christ appeared, in all ten times, after His resurrection, leaving out the appearance to Paul. These appearances were under the greatest possible variety of circumstances and conditions. The first five appearances were on the third day after the crucifixion, the day when Christ rose.

Consider the variety of circumstances under which Christ appeared. He sits at table and blesses the bread with two disciples; He had already expounded to them the Scripture. He tells a doubting disciple to thrust his hands into His side to convince himself. He partakes of broiled fish with the disciples by the lakeside. An important fact to be noted is the numerous teachings of Jesus during the resurrection appearances. This makes it impossible that disciples could have merely imagined they saw Him. He appears to one disciple alone, to two, to the women, to the twelve, to seven, to five hundred at once. He appears repeatedly in Jerusalem, by the lakeside in Galilee, on the Emmaus walk, on the Galilean mountain, and on the Mount of Olives before the ascension.

On all these occasions and in all these ways the witnesses of the resurrection gained their knowledge. Their eyes were witnesses, for they saw His familiar form. Their ears were witnesses, for they heard the same loving accents of His voice. Their minds were witnesses, because He taught them with the same old authority and power. Their hearts were witnesses, because again their affections were stirred to their depths by His gracious dealings with them. This mental and spiritual recognition of Christ is of great importance. Dr. Kennedy quotes Lord Chief Justice Cockburn in the summing up of a celebrated trial as follows: "I now pass from the question of identity of person to a question which is of quite equal or of greater importance, and that is, how far there is not outward identity or resemblance but inward identity of mind."



It is clear that none of the disciples expected Christ to rise from the dead. The women were anxious as to how the stone could be removed from the door of the sepulchre that they might enter. John says: "As yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead" (John xx:9). On the Emmaus journey Jesus rebukes the disciples for being "slow of heart to believe" (Luke xxiv:25). These disciples were sad and despondent over the disappointment of all their hopes.

We pass to the testimony of the Apostle Paul. His conversion took place when the risen Christ appeared to him on the way to Damascus. This is his own account of the matter. It is the only possible explanation of the career of this man, his sudden complete change in character and mission. He is suddenly transformed from being a man who is seeking "to suppress the Gospel in every creature into a man who seeks to preach the Gospel to every creature." The enemy and persecutor becomes the champion of the faith. No vestige of evidence exists in support of any other theory of his conversion, such as a gradual change in Paul's mind due to natural causes.

Paul preached the Gospel of the resurrection throughout Asia Minor, in Greece and in Rome. In the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians he argues not to prove that Christ arose merely, but to show the bearing of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body on the Christian hope. He sets forth the facts as to Christ: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures; and that He appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve; then He appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep; then He appeared to James; then

to all the apostles; and last of all as unto one born out of due time He appeared to me also" (1 Cor. 15:3-8).

Let it be borne in mind that this epistle is undisputed. It was written not more than twenty-five years after the death of Christ. The appeal is to more than two hundred and fifty living witnesses to the resurrection of Christ. Consider the folly of such an appeal had there been no such witnesses, or had they borne a contrary testimony. The apostle enumerates five appearances of Christ. Individuals are named from whom he had the opportunity to obtain the information. He himself saw the risen Christ, not in a trance or by means of a vision, but actually. What he saw made him a witness of the resurrection and an apostle just as Peter and Paul<sup>1</sup> and the others were qualified to be apostles. Moreover, Paul founds his Gospel on the resurrection. Without it all was vain. The cross which he preached was meaningless.

Here, then, is the chain of proof from the testimony of Paul: An eye-witness speaks of what he saw; his witness comes through an authentic document from his own hand; the testimony relates to an event which occurred within twenty-five years of the writing of the document; the testimony of the writer appeals for corroboration to two hundred and fifty living witnesses. Surely all the tests of credibility may be successfully applied to this testimony. Moreover, whatever may be true as to date and authorship of the four Gospels we have in Paul's four acknowledged epistles ample and irrefutable proof of the resurrection of Christ.

Consider next the manifold way in which the apostolic witness to the resurrection of Jesus is confirmed. It is confirmed in a remarkable manner by the sudden and complete moral transformation of those who witnessed it. We have already noted the case of the apostle Paul. So it was with the others. In Jerusalem, in the very mouth of the lion, the frightened and fleeing dis-

<sup>1</sup> *Sic.* The author perhaps means "John."

ciples who had denied their Lord gather again and with dauntless courage proclaim this most offensive doctrine, and thousands are converted. These men are careless now of danger and of death. Most of them yield themselves to stripes, imprisonment, and finally death for the truth of their witness. Fraud does not engender such moral and physical courage. Delusion does not create moral kingdoms of heavenly beauty and power. Psychic changes, mere mental impressions, springing up within and spending themselves after their kind, do not rear new fabrics containing material wholly absent from the minds in which they occur. The tree brings forth fruit after its kind and no other. Here was fruit which was not after the human kind. The resurrection was the efficient cause, and it alone was equal to the result.

The doctrine of the Person of Christ turned upon the fact of the resurrection. He was "marked out" to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection of the dead, was Paul's way of stating it (Romans 1:4). His atoning work had no value without the resurrection. "He was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification" (Romans 4:25). The hope of Christ's second coming in glory, in the view of New Testament Christians, grew out of the resurrection and its attendant events and teachings. Moreover, the resurrection of our own bodies is expected as a result of that of Christ, who was the "first fruits of them that slept."

It is to be noted also that only a physical resurrection can answer to the total New Testament account of what occurred in Joseph's tomb. A mere survival of the spirit of Christ is foreign to and inconsistent with every item in the record. Exegesis and literary criticism stultify themselves by so violent a construction of the resurrection stories.

There were disputes and controversies among the Christians of apostolic times, but no difference of opinion existed on this point. The Judaizers troubled Paul, but

they did not question the fact of Christ's resurrection. "Even the heretics who said there was no resurrection of the dead (*i.e.*, Christians) could be argued with on the ground of their belief in Christ's resurrection."

The first day of the week took the place of the Jewish Sabbath as the day of rest and worship as a result of the resurrection of Jesus on the first day of the week. Every week, then, through the Christian era the memorial day has borne witness to Christ's resurrection. The Christian church also is an institution which rests upon the resurrection as its foundation. These two witnesses bear their testimony today and cannot be explained away.

It remains to consider briefly the attempts to account for the New Testament records of the resurrection of Jesus without belief in the fact of the resurrection. Formerly the resurrection stories were ascribed to fraud. The disciples stole the body away and asserted that He rose, or other form of fraud was practiced. This theory is abandoned today. Its absurdity was enough to condemn it at the outset. What possible interest could men have had in preaching and dying for a mere dead and impotent Christ? The theory of fraud recoiled upon its advocates. Christianity as a moral phenomenon could not, as Dr. Robertson Nicoll says, be "built on rottenness." Men felt this. Even unbelievers could not but admit it.

The alleged resurrection, others assert, was due to a swoon. Jesus did not die. He was reanimated, after lying in the grave for three days, from only an apparent death. Even Professor Huxley among moderns has hinted at this as a possible explanation. This theory, of course, denies that even the spear-thrust of the Roman soldier ended the life of Jesus, and assumes that the enfeebled body of the resuscitated Christ was equal to rolling away the stone which was a protection from men without, and that somehow Jesus eluded the Roman guards who were placed to watch the tomb. Strauss,

who rejected the resurrection of Christ, gives the conclusive answer to the swoon theory: "It is impossible that a being who had stolen half dead out of the sepulchre, who crept about weak and ill, wanting medical treatment, who required bandaging, strengthening and indulgence, and who still at last yielded to His sufferings, could have given to His disciples the impression that He was a conqueror over death and the grave, the Prince of Life—an impression which lay at the bottom of their future ministry. Such a resuscitation could only have weakened the impression which He had made upon them in life and in death; at most could only have given it an elegiac voice, but could by no possibility have changed their sorrow into enthusiasm, have elevated their reverence into worship."

Another theory, advocated by Keim, denies that Christ's body was raised, but holds that in some way the living spiritual Jesus did communicate with the disciples after His death. This recognizes the miraculous, but satisfies neither naturalist nor supernaturalist. It is utterly inconsistent with many passages, such as "Handle Me and see," etc. If Jesus' body lay in the grave, then He was subject to sin and death as other men. The theory empties the doctrinal teaching, based on the resurrection, by early disciples, of all meaning. The theory also fails utterly to account for the empty grave of Jesus.

But we pass to consider the most generally accepted modern theory advocated by unbelievers. It is known as the hallucination or vision theory. Strauss, Renan and others have held it in one form or another. Jesus died, it says, but did not rise. His body remained in the grave. Nor did He communicate with the disciples. They were in a highly excited and excitable nervous state. Mary Magdalene, at the tomb, much overwrought, imagined she saw Jesus, and told her story to other overwrought disciples. They heard a window rattle or the wind whistle and imagined Christ spoke to them. Others



heard and believed likewise. Renan thinks that Peter dreamed the scene at the lakeside and the interview with the risen Jesus. Thus arose the conviction of the resurrection. Thus the foundation of Christianity was laid. For all candid and discriminating critics admit that the conviction of the resurrection was the heart of the early preaching.

The replies to this theory are manifold and conclusive. The mental state of the disciples precluded hallucination. Men who see ghosts are usually looking for them. A state of expectancy precedes the vision. But the disciples were in despair. Every hope was blasted by the death of Jesus, as the two on the way to Emmaus alleged. Besides no past experience prepared for this hallucination. Physiological psychology insists that every hallucination is the product of previous brain-states due to abnormal stimulus from within or without. But there were no brain-states produced by previous experience to furnish the contents of this extraordinary hallucination. Resurrection appearances were not a staple of Jewish history. The brain-states which were freshest with these men were the result of fear of Jewish and Roman rulers, coupled with loss of hope concerning Jesus. Jerusalem was the last place in which the morbid imagination of a woman could convert a large group of cowardly men into moral heroes. Jerusalem just then was not a good vision climate.

Moreover, there were five hundred others who came under the power of this hallucination, scattered abroad even in far Galilee. None doubts. All succumb and go forth and turn the world upside down. Men who were mockers and doubters at first, afterward yield to the hallucination. There were surely no overwrought nerves or previous brain-states with these to induce them to give credence to so remarkable a tale. Moreover, the effects of this hallucination, its power to transform men, survive. The test of time has but strengthened its hold on men.

Then, too, these victims of hallucination, these men of overwrought nerves, were under a strange restraint. Ten times the vision comes, then suddenly it ceases. Why? Hallucinations should have become chronic after five hundred had been brought under their sway. But now hallucination gives place to a definite and conquering program of evangelization. Not vision now, not dreams now, but witnessing and work. Truly these were marvelous fanatics!

But whence the teachings of the risen Christ? Hallucination is usually wanting in this element. Here were words, thoughts, commands, which these evangelists adopt and upon them base all their future action. And what of the dead body of Jesus all this time? It was the interest of friend and foe alike to produce it. Disciples would wish to do so to verify or disprove their hallucination. Enemies would surely have done so for obvious reasons. The empty grave of Jesus baffles every theory of resurrection save the true one. Strauss reconstructs the story and allows time for the growth and theory of the visions. But it is clear from the account that four or five of the appearances of the risen Christ occurred on the day of the resurrection, the third day after the burial.

The law of cause and effect is violated also by the vision theory. It furnishes no explanation of Christianity. Spiritualism with its visions produces no such moral fruits. Men who write histories of Christianity often evade the problem of the cause at this point. Strauss and Harnack both recognize that the doctrine of the resurrection is the vital breath of early preaching and the cause of Christianity, but, as historians, waive the question of fact. Well they may if denial is proposed. It is only as philosophers that they deny or leave doubtful the fact.

In the realm of testimony, then, by all scientific methods of dealing with questions of history, the resurrection of Christ stands. Regarding the assertion that

miracle is impossible Dr. Alexander Maclaren well says: "One would like to know how it comes that our modern men of science, who protest so much against science being corrupted by metaphysics, should commit themselves to an assertion like that. Surely that is stark, staring metaphysics. It seems as if they thought that the metaphysics which said that there was anything behind the physical universe was unscientific; but that the metaphysics which said that there was nothing behind physics was quite legitimate, and ought to be allowed to pass muster. What have the votaries of pure physical science, who hold the barren word-contests of theology in such contempt to do out-Heroding Herod in that fashion, and venturing on metaphysical assertions of such a sort?"

Christianity stands or falls with the resurrection of Jesus. The issue may as well be squarely faced. Other miracles of Christ are easy to accept if this one took place. Our hope is built on it. "For if He be not risen there is no resurrection; and if He be not risen there is no forgiveness; and if He be not risen there is no Son of God; and the world is desolate, and the heaven is empty, and the grave is dark, and sin abides and death is eternal. If Christ be dead, then that awful vision is true, 'As I looked up into the immeasurable heavens for the divine eye, it froze me with an empty bottomless eye-socket.'" But "we take up the ancient glad salutation 'The Lord is risen,' and turning from these thoughts of disaster and despair that that awful supposition drags after it, fall back upon the sober certainty and with the apostle break forth in triumph, 'Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.'"

### PAUL VS. THE GOSPELS ON THE RESURRECTION <sup>1</sup>

The stories at the end of our Gospels are so late in origin, so confused and mutually contradictory, so out

<sup>1</sup> By Durant Drake. *Problems of Religion.* p. 84-5, footnote.

of line with Paul's allusions and with all inherent plausibility, that they must be pretty completely discounted. Paul shows no knowledge of an empty tomb; Christ's resurrection, in his thought, is an emergence of his spirit "from the region of the dead" (ἐκ νεκρῶν)—a spiritual resurrection such as he expected for all the faithful, not a reanimation of the body and rising from the grave. Indeed, the whole discussion in 1 Cor. 15 is aimed against those who understand the resurrection to mean a raising of the dead body—the belief, in embryo, which the Gospel stories represent. . . . We must be on guard, in reading the words of Jesus and Paul, against reading back into them the later ideas embodied in the Gospel endings.

### THE BODILY RESURRECTION NOT ESSENTIAL<sup>1</sup>

The strength of the entire New Testament is the assurance that Jesus is alive. The assurance came to the twelve through what they believed to be physical appearances. The assurance came to Paul through a vision, through an experience in his mind and soul. The assurance is the supreme thing, and concerning this all the apostles are at one. The assurance of Paul is mightier today because we may gain it for ourselves. We cannot see the empty grave, we cannot walk with Jesus from Jerusalem to Emmaus; we cannot hear Him speak to us from the shore of the sea, calling us to dine. The form of assurance peculiar to the original disciples is inaccessible to us. If their faith becomes our faith, it is through our faith in them. With the form of assurance for which Paul stands it is different. His whole new being was the witness of the truth of his faith; he had no eye-sight, no outward material evidence; it was all a transaction in his intellect and character. When we have his experience or something like it, we shall have his assurance. . . .

<sup>1</sup> By George A. Gordon. *Religion and Miracle*, p. 128-9. Reprinted by permission of the author and holder of the copyright.

## BODILY RESURRECTION OUT OF THE QUESTION, BUT SPIRITUAL APPEARANCES POSSIBLE <sup>1</sup>

The disappearance or absolute annihilation, the re-animation, or the sudden transformation into something not quite material and yet not quite spiritual, of a really dead body, would involve the violation of the best ascertained laws of physics, chemistry, and physiology. Were the testimony fifty times stronger than it is, any hypothesis would be more possible than that. But in the present state of our knowledge of the kind of causality which is discovered in the relation between mind and mind, or between mind and body, there is nothing to be said against the possibility of an appearance of Christ to His disciples, which was a real though supernormal psychological event, but which involved nothing which can properly be spoken of as a suspension of natural law.

## WERE THE WOMEN AT THE RIGHT TOMB? <sup>2</sup>

If it be granted that the exact words <sup>3</sup> of the young man [at the tomb] in the Marcan narrative are merely an inference from the experience of the women, interpreted in the light of further knowledge and of doctrinal presupposition, it becomes a matter of importance to ask whether this inference was justifiable, or, in other words, whether the facts might have been otherwise interpreted.

It is desirable to reiterate that the inference was, and is, reasonable for those who hold that the resurrection of Christians as well as of Christ must imply a resuscitation of the flesh and blood laid in the tomb. On this

<sup>1</sup> Dean Rashdall, quoted in Lake, *Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*. p. 269.

<sup>2</sup> By Professor Kirsopp Lake. *The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*. p. 249-53.

<sup>3</sup> "Be not amazed: ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, who hath been crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold, the place where thy laid him!"



theory the tomb of Christ, if He rose, was certainly empty, and the inference of the women was perfectly natural. This view was all but universal in the early church, and has, of course, still many adherents; but it cannot be said to be undisputed, and the question is, whether the experience of the women can be given any interpretation other than their own. There is little to gain by multiplying imaginary reconstructions which cannot be proved, but merely as an indication that the interpretation of the women is not the only one possible, the following suggestions may be offered.

It is seriously a matter for doubt whether the women were really in a position to be quite certain that the tomb which they visited was that in which they had seen Joseph of Arimathaea bury the Lord's body. . . . They had spent the day in watching the dying agony of their Master, and it is not in human nature at such a time calmly to consider a question of locality. Moreover, it is very doubtful if they were close to the tomb at the moment of burial. . . . The possibility, therefore, that they came to the wrong tomb is to be reckoned with, and it is important because it supplies the natural explanation of the fact that whereas they had seen the tomb closed, they found it open. . . .

If it were not the same [tomb], the circumstances all seem to fall into line. The women came in the early morning to a tomb which they thought was the one in which they had seen the Lord buried. They expected to find a closed tomb, but they found an open one; and a young man, who was in the entrance, guessing their errand, tried to tell them that they had made a mistake in the place. "He is not here," said he; "see the place where they laid Him," and probably pointed to the next tomb. But the women were frightened at the detection of their errand and fled, only imperfectly or not at all understanding what they had heard. It was only later on, when they knew that the Lord was risen, and—on their view—that His tomb must be empty, that they came to believe that

the young man was something more than they had seen; that he was not telling them of their mistake, but announcing the resurrection, and that his intention was to give a message for the disciples.

These remarks are not to be taken as anything more than a suggestion of what might possibly have happened. All that is said is that if the facts had been of this kind, persons who had the opinions and the experience of the women and of the evangelists would have produced such a narrative as we possess, and would naturally and inevitably have connected the experience of the women, the open tomb, and the resurrection in the manner which we find in Mark, because they believed that the resurrection must imply an empty tomb. Those who still believe in this necessity are justified in making the same inference, but those of us who believe that the resurrection need not imply an empty tomb are justified in saying that the narrative might have been produced by causes in accordance with our belief, and that the inference of the women is one which is not binding on us. The empty tomb is for us doctrinally indefensible and is historically insufficiently accredited.

. . . I would reiterate that the crucial point is the definition which we give to the resurrection. If we hope for this in our case in such a way as to resuscitate the human flesh which will be laid in the ground, we must postulate the same for the "first-born from the dead." If we do not believe, and would not desire this for ourselves, it is illogical that we should believe that it was so for Him.

## D. SUPPLEMENTARY EXTRACT

### DR. FOSDICK'S VIEW OF THE DEITY OF CHRIST<sup>1</sup>

Why is the New Testament so full of hope about redeemed humanity? Not alone because Jesus was human, but because Jesus was divine, the revelation of the living God who seeks to be incarnate in every one of us. If one says that we cannot hope to be fully equal to Him here, surely that is painfully obvious. As Emerson says, "A drop of water has the properties of the sea, but cannot exhibit a storm." So we reveal God without the deeps and tides and currents which Jesus knew, without the relationships with the world's life which His influence has sustained. Yet the God Who was in Jesus is the same God Who is in us. You cannot have one God and two kinds of divinity; and while like drops of water we are very small beside His sea, yet it was one of the supreme days in man's spiritual history when the New Testament started men singing that they were "children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." . . .

A French painter once came down from the provinces where all his life he had daubed along at his painting according to his ability, and in Florence saw for the first time a magnificent painting by Titian. He never had supposed that there was anything like that in all the world. After looking at it for a long time he was heard to say with mingled humility and pride, "I, too, am a painter." So Christians stand before the Master. O

<sup>1</sup> Sermon on The Divinity of Jesus. Christian Work. 114: 426-30. April 7, 1923. Since Dr. Fosdick insists that he believes in the deity of Christ, it seems only fair to quote from this sermon in order to make clear what he means by the phrase.

Christ, Thou art the Lord of glory! Yet, Son of God supreme, Thou hast this effect upon Thy followers, that with mingled humility and pride we say, "I, too am a son of God."

Part V

THE POSITION OF MODERNISTS IN  
ORTHODOX CHURCHES





## THE PARSONS' BATTLE<sup>1</sup>

Deep contention is again troubling the waters of Protestant Christianity in America, and notoriously the storm engages the vivid interest of all kinds of people in all parts of the country. The newspapers are supplying the contending churchmen with a whole land for an arena and with a whole people for an audience. What is the controversy about? Is it as unseemly and un-Christian as Bishop Manning implied when he asked for a Christmas truce? Should lay Christians with the interests of organized Christianity at heart do their best to hush it up? Or should they appraise it, not as an indication of the decadence and probable disintegration of Protestant Christianity in America, but of its increasing vitality?

There are many possible avenues to the center of this controversy, but the avenue to which the foregoing questions point looks to us most promising. We have not asked, be it observed, whether or not the Modernists are justified in seeking to exclude from the creeds affirmations of doubtful scientific authenticity. That question is already answered. It is just as absurd for the Fundamentalists to reject the evolutionary hypothesis on the grounds which they do as it was for the Catholic prelates to insist that the earth was flat. In that respect the Modernists are wholly right and their opponents wholly wrong. But the controversy between them invites other and more doubtful questions. If the Modernists are right and the creeds need to be revised and reinterpreted in the light of modern science, what effect will the revision have upon the cohesion and the future of the Protestant denominations? These creeds have in the

<sup>1</sup> From *New Republic*. 37: 161-2. January 9, 1924.

past supplied the keystones for the arches which carried the superstructure of denominational Christianity. What will happen to the Protestant churches if common conviction becomes so unimportant that their members may or may not believe in the virgin birth or the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, or the divinity of Christ? In short, what are the binding motives of the members of a Protestant Christian church? What is the proper test of their fidelity? Under what provocation should they secede or insist on the secession of others? What part should joint conviction play in the spiritual fellowship of a Protestant denomination?

During the centuries when all Christians were supposed to belong to one supreme and indivisible church, joint conviction constituted the chief binder of organized Christianity. The doubter of any article of the creed and its authorized ecclesiastical interpretation was *ipso facto* beyond the pale. He was the most dangerous enemy of the Christian community, and the church punished him not merely by imprisonment and death in this world but by the denial of salvation in the next. After the Reformation Protestants continued for several centuries to attach enormous importance to community of conviction. They gradually abandoned the attempt to reach common convictions by the exercise of compulsion, but the unity of belief within the churches which they could not obtain by compulsion, they obtained by precisely the opposite course—viz., complete and in practice irresponsible freedom in forming new Christian communions. The multiplication of dissenting sects during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries became by a significant paradox both the weakness and the strength of Protestantism. In forming new dissenting groups, Protestants demonstrated the vitality of their religious convictions, but at the same time they condemned this conscious ingredient in their faith to an essentially trivial and controversial expression.

Recently the Protestant leaders have naturally sought to check and even to reverse this tendency in Protestant Christian behavior; and they have on the whole succeeded. Of course new and formidable sects like the Christian Scientists have been born and flourished, but Christian Science was a special case and was created by a special need which the leaders of the evangelical sects have never sufficiently understood. Generally speaking Protestantism had consciously labored to avoid further secessions. Occasions for dissent still existed in abundance, but the possible dissenters were chiefly clergymen whose historical and biological knowledge had compelled them to question the literal truth of certain articles in the creed, and these scholars were too sophisticated to repeat the barren procedure whereby former Protestants had demonstrated the sincerity of their convictions. They are reformers but they are not schismatics. They propose to take their church with them and are, consequently, most reluctant to part company with it. While ultimately they expect and hope to alter the wording of the Episcopal or Presbyterian creed, they are for the present only trying to secure the freedom to doubt and discuss its affirmations and, if necessary, to take refuge in symbolic or broad interpretations. But during the period of agitation, when they are educating the members of the churches to accept revision, they wish to avoid any question as to their title to be called Presbyterians or Episcopalians. They are boring from within.

Their desire to avoid futile secession is understandable and intelligent, but in acting upon it they incur a penalty the importance of which liberal Protestants do not sufficiently admit. The conscious avoidance of secession as the expression of dissenting beliefs implicitly repudiates the traditional basis of denominational Christianity. The Protestant sects have combined a belief in creeds as the test of ecclesiastical fellowship with the abandonment of compulsion as a means of keeping their

members loyal to the communion. But they have until recently kept creeds alive and near to the hearts of believers by permitting and even encouraging dissent and secession. What in the light of this historical fact are the implications and what are likely to be the consequences of the proposed checking of the practice by the Modernists? Are the Protestant denominations capable of becoming coalitions rather than communities of believers? Is it a movement away from Protestantism and toward a revived Catholicism? If so, what will be the bond of union in the hypothetically universal church and how may it come to prevail? If not, what will happen to the Protestant denominations, deprived as they will be of the common understanding, the affirmation of which has constituted hitherto their chief reason for existence?

It is questions of this kind combined with the attempt of the Modernists to bore from within which explain the fierceness of the controversy and the zeal and the "intolerance" of the Fundamentalists. They are afraid that, if they do not assume the offensive and drive the skeptics and latitudinarians out of their particular church, they will allow fundamentalism to fall by default. The modernist alteration of the creeds would attach meanings to Presbyterianism and Anglicanism which are repugnant to them. If new interpretations or phrasings should prevail, they would consider it necessary themselves to secede. But why should they withdraw from a church whose creed, as it now reads and as it has generally been interpreted in the past, is satisfactory to them? Why not force the innovators out and keep their church for true believers like themselves? They would not in that case be denying the right of the Modernist to think anything he pleases. They would merely insist that, unless he accepted certain assertions about the meaning of their faith which the brethren consider fundamental, he should withdraw from a fellowship whose common assumptions he no longer accepts.



This claim of the Fundamentalists is entitled to a respectful hearing. The really important bone of contention between them and the Modernists concerns the necessity and function of community of conviction in the fellowship of a Protestant denomination. The Modernists evade a sharp statement of the issue by accusing their opponents of intolerance, and intolerant the conservatives undoubtedly are, but they are intolerant in the hope of preserving the traditional bond of union in denominational Christianity—that of common understanding. The same bond of union may be unnecessary in the future, but if it is discarded its rejection will assuredly alter profoundly the psychology of Protestant Christianity. For this reason the Modernists can hardly justify their novel combination of radicalism of belief with conformity in action without undertaking a task which they have hitherto disregarded. They should meet fundamentalism on its chosen ground and explain the kind of common understanding which the churches may substitute for allegiance to authoritatively interpreted dogma as the chief source of cohesion in a Christian community. They have never satisfied the perfectly fair demand of the conservatives for some indication of what modernism means in addition to unhampered discussion and the spirit of free inquiry. If it does mean common understanding is that understanding restricted to common standards of Christian ethics or does it include a common vision of Christian truth in its relation to the universe and human life?

The scope of the influence which modernism exerts on Protestant Christianity will depend upon its answer to the last question. Modernism must seek, if it is capable of rising to its opportunity, the gradual destruction of the forbidding barriers which have divided for so long the naturalistic explanation of the world from the Christian faith. For the moment the Modernists limit themselves to questioning certain affirmations of the creeds which the advance of historical and biological

knowledge has rendered obsolete, but in divorcing Christianity from these errors they are only driving in the outposts of Protestant dogmatic conservatism. Unless they are content like previous Protestants to remain mere dissenters, they must supply to Protestant Christianity the positive impulse and the increasing understanding which will make for reunion and reconstruction. The fundamental trouble with the Protestant denominations is that some centuries ago they abandoned the effective organized moral leadership of the Christian peoples to the state. It is the business of the Modernists to equip and educate the Christian church to resume leadership, and this they cannot do unless they place religious faith behind the attempt to employ science in behalf of the fulfilment of man's whole life as industry and the state have used it for the satisfaction of partial and special human desires.

We would like to see the Modernists become Fundamentalists in the interest of a Christian revival. The world of today is bound to drift away from a religion whose professors either reject or at best merely tolerate the contemporary science, which is no less divided from the plastic artist than it is from the scientist and which cannot either reach a common understanding of what fundamentally Christianity means nor pull together without such an understanding. A regenerate Christianity can only spring from an alliance between naturalism, and aesthetic imagination and the Christian faith. We welcome the apparent decision of the Fundamentalists to precipitate the issue between themselves and the reformers in the hope that the challenge may stimulate the Modernists to move toward their only adequate ultimate objective. Modernism is latently far more radical than the Modernists. If the latter are forced to find a substitute for their allegiance to Presbyterianism and Episcopalianism, they may be roused to build a new foundation in common understanding for an essentially non-denominational Christian community. They may give

form to the synthesis between science, art and religion, between research, imagination and faith which the modern world of today so grievously needs.



## A. AGAINST THE RIGHT OF THE MODERNISTS TO REMAIN

### BRIEF STATEMENTS <sup>1</sup>

R. A. TORREY, DEAN OF THE BIBLE INSTITUTE OF LOS  
ANGELES:

Personally, I think it would be desirable, if possible, that there should be a new alignment of Christians. The old denominational differences have lost their significance. The alignment should be along the line of whether people accept the Bible as the inerrant word of God or not. Those that do not should get together, irrespective of present denominational connections, and form a new denomination, and those who do should get together and form a new denomination.

PROFESSOR JOHN GRESHAM MACHEN, OF PRINCETON  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY:

Two mutually exclusive religions are being propagated within the Presbyterian church, as within other "evangelical" churches. One is the great redemptive religion known as Christianity; the other is the naturalistic or agnostic modernism represented by Dr. Fosdick and by many Presbyterian ministers. If one of these is true the other is false. It is, therefore, quite intolerable that both of them should be propagated by the same funds and with the endorsement of the same organization. . . . It is high time that all mental reservations, all "interpretations" which really are thoroughgoing contradictions of perfectly plain documents, should be abandoned and that there should be a return to common sense and common honesty.

<sup>1</sup> Homiletic Review. 86: 186-90. September, 1923. The Battle Within the Churches.



MODERNISTS HAVE NO RIGHT TO BE IN  
ORTHODOX CHURCHES<sup>1</sup>

. . . An evangelical church is composed of a number of persons who have come to agreement in a certain message about Christ and who desire to unite in the propagation of that message, as it is set forth in their creed on the basis of the Bible. No one is forced to unite himself with the body thus formed. . . . If other persons desire to form a religious association with some purpose other than the propagation of a message—for example, the purpose of promoting in the world, simply by exhortation and by the inspiration of the example of Jesus, a certain type of life—they are at perfect liberty to do so. But for an organization which is founded with the fundamental purpose of propagating a message to commit its resources and its name to those who are engaged in combating the message is not tolerance but simple dishonesty. Yet it is exactly this course of action that is advocated by those who would allow non-doctrinal religion to be taught in the name of doctrinal churches—churches that are plainly doctrinal both in their constitutions and in the declarations which they require of every candidate for ordination.

The matter may be made plain by an illustration from secular life. Suppose in a political campaign in America there be formed a Democratic club for the purpose of furthering the cause of the Democratic party. Suppose there are certain other citizens who are opposed to the tenets of the Democratic club and in opposition desire to support the Republican party. What is the honest way for them to accomplish their purpose? Plainly it is simply the formation of a Republican club which shall carry on a propaganda in favor of Republican principles. But suppose, instead of pursuing this simple course of

<sup>1</sup> By J. Gresham Machen. *Christianity and Liberalism*. p. 168-70. Copyright (1923), The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

action, the advocates of Republican principles should conceive the notion of making a declaration of conformity to Democratic principles, thus gaining an entrance into the Democratic club and finally turning its resources into an anti-Democratic propaganda. That plan might be ingenious. But would it be honest? Yet it is just exactly such a plan which is adopted by advocates of a non-doctrinal religion who by subscription to a creed gain an entrance into the teaching ministry of doctrinal or evangelical churches. . . . The church may possibly be more honest, but certainly it ought not to be less honest, than a political club.

### ARE THE MODERNISTS HONEST?<sup>1</sup>

Why do the liberals conceal their views and suppress discussion? If they believe that their interpretation of the Bible is correct, why do they not proclaim it from the housetop? Why do they attempt, by the use of epithets, to terrorize the masses of the church into accepting without proof or even discussion the views of those who put their own authority above the authority of the Bible? Surely we can expect of ministers, even though they call themselves liberal, a standard of honor as high as that which is required in politics. Candidates for office run upon platforms and ask the support only of those who entertain similar views; why should not candidates for the pulpits be as frank with those who pay their salaries?

I digress for a moment to answer an oft-repeated assertion, namely, that the church is suppressing "freedom of thought." How can a church exist unless it stands for something? And who shall determine what the church stands for except the church itself? Why should anyone desire to preach for a church unless he agrees with the church? And why should a church per-

<sup>1</sup> By W. J. Bryan. *The Fundamentals. Forum.* 70: 1665-80. July, 1923.

mit one to represent it as a preacher who does not believe in the things for which it stands? Will any one contend that a minister who, after an examination, has been given a license to preach, is at liberty to change his views, renounce the doctrines of the church and then insist upon the right to misrepresent the church?

As an *individual*, anyone is free to believe anything he likes or to refuse to believe. That is his privilege in this country and it is a very important privilege which should always be protected. That is the very essence of freedom of conscience. But freedom of conscience belongs to *individuals* only. No man has a right to substitute his conscience for the conscience of a church or the conscience of a congregation. A preacher who conceals his views from those who pay his salary, knowing when he does so that his salary would terminate if his views were known, is obtaining money under false pretense and is just as guilty of a crime as the man who is sent to the penitentiary for obtaining money on false statements. A congregation has a right to *assume* that a preacher, if an honest man, would not accept a position unless his views were in agreement with the views of the church. Some preachers have tried to avoid a statement of their views by declaring non-essential the doctrines they reject—hence it was necessary for the General Assembly to assert that these doctrines are *essential* as well as true. If a preacher can, by declaring a doctrine non-essential, justify himself in concealing his views on the subject, he can eliminate from the Bible anything he pleases, regardless of what the members of his congregation may regard as essential. The Presbyterian General Assembly has nailed these “essential” doctrines of the church on the front of the pulpit so that the congregation can measure the minister by the church’s pronouncement.

SOME DIFFERENCES DO NOT PREVENT  
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP, BUT THIS  
ONE DOES <sup>1</sup>

One such difference of opinion, which has been attaining increasing prominence in recent years, concerns the order of events in connection with the Lord's return. A large number of Christian people believe that when evil has reached its climax in the world, the Lord Jesus will return to this earth in bodily presence to bring about a reign of righteousness which will last a thousand years, and that only after that period the end of the world will come. That belief, in the opinion of the present writer, is an error, arrived at by a false interpretation of the Word of God; we do not think that the prophecies of the Bible permit so definite a mapping-out of future events. The Lord will come again, and it will be no mere "spiritual" coming in the modern sense—so much is clear—but that so little will be accomplished by the present dispensation of the Holy Spirit and so much will be left to be accomplished by the Lord in bodily presence—such a view we cannot find to be justified by the words of Scripture. What is our attitude, then, with regard to this debate? Certainly it cannot be an attitude of indifference. The recrudescence of "Chiliasm" or "premillennialism" in the modern church causes us serious concern; it is coupled, we think, with a false method of interpreting Scripture which in the long run will be productive of harm. Yet how great is our agreement with those who hold the premillennial view! They share to the full our reverence for the authority of the Bible, and differ from us only in the interpretation of the Bible; they share our ascription of deity to the Lord Jesus, and our supernaturalistic conception both of the entrance of Jesus into the world and of the consummation when He shall come again. Certainly, then, from our point of

<sup>1</sup> By J. Gresham Machen. *Christianity and Liberalism*. p. 48-52. Copyright (1923), The Macmillan Company. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

view, their error, serious though it may be, is not a deadly error; and Christian fellowship, with loyalty not only to the Bible but to the great creeds of the church, can still unite us with them. It is, therefore, highly misleading when modern liberals represent the present issue in the church, both in the mission field and at home, as being an issue between premillennialism and the opposite view. It is really an issue between Christianity, whether premillennial or not, on the one side, and a naturalistic negation of all Christianity on the other.

Another difference of opinion which can subsist in the midst of Christian fellowship is the difference of opinion about the mode of efficacy of the sacraments. . . .

Still another difference of opinion concerns the nature and prerogatives of the Christian ministry. . . . Here again, the difference is no trifle. . . . But . . . it does not descend to the very roots. Even to the conscientious Anglican himself, though he regards the members of other bodies as in schism, Christian fellowship with individuals in those other bodies is still possible; and certainly those who reject the Anglican view of the ministry can regard the Anglican church as a genuine and very noble member in the body of Christ.

. . . We would not indeed obscure the difference which divides us from Rome. The gulf is indeed profound. But profound as it is, it seems almost trifling compared to the abyss which stands between us and many ministers of our own church. The church of Rome may represent a perversion of the Christian religion; but naturalistic liberalism is not Christianity at all.

## PASTORAL LETTER OF THE HOUSE OF BISHOPS OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH<sup>1</sup>

BRETHREN OF THE CLERGY AND LAITY:

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father  
and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Adopted November 14, 1923, at a special meeting of the House at Dallas, Texas. From the official copy.



We are aware of the widespread distress and disturbance of mind among many earnest church people, both clerical and lay, caused by several recent utterances concerning the Creeds. Moreover, as the Chief Pastors of the Church solemnly pledged to uphold its Faith, we have been formally appealed to by eminent laymen for advice and guidance with the regard to the questions thus raised.

We, your Bishops, put forth these words of explanation and, we trust, of reassurance.

1. A distinction is to be recognized (as in the Catechism) between the profession of our *belief in*, *i.e.*, of entire surrender to, the Triune God, and the declaration that we *believe* certain facts about the operations of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, our Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier. The former is far more important as expressing our relation and attitude towards the Personal God. But the affirmation of the facts, declared by Holy Scripture and part of the belief of the Christian Church from the beginning, is of vital importance to faith and life. The Christian faith may be distinguished from the forms in which it is expressed as something deeper and higher, and more personal, but not by contradicting the terms in which it has always been expressed.

2. The Creeds give and require no theories or explanations of the facts which they rehearse. No explanation is given of the Trinity, *how* God is at the same time absolutely One in His Spiritual Being, and yet exists in a three-fold manner; nor concerning the Incarnation, of the *manner* in which the Divine and Human natures are linked together in the One Person of our Lord Jesus Christ; nor of the *nature* of the resurrection body, Christ's or ours.

3. The shorter Apostles' Creed is to be interpreted in the light of the fuller Nicene Creed. The more elaborate statements of the latter safeguard the sense in which the simpler language of the former is to be under-

stood, for instance with reference to the term, "The Son of God."

4. Some test of earnest and sincere purpose of discipleship, for belief and for life, is reasonably required for admission to the Christian Society. Accordingly profession of the Apostles' Creed, as a summary of Christian belief, stands and has stood from early days, along with Renunciation of evil and the promise of Obedience to God's Commandments, as a condition of Baptism.

5. A clergyman, whether Deacon, Priest or Bishop, is required as a condition of receiving his ministerial commission, to promise conformity to the doctrine, discipline and worship of this Church. Among the offences for which he is liable to be presented for trial is the holding and teaching publicly or privately, and advisedly, doctrine contrary to that of this church. Individual aberrations, in teaching or practice, are regrettable and censurable; but they ought not to be taken as superseding the deliberate and written standards of the Church. It is irreconcilable with the vows voluntarily made at ordination for a minister of this Church to deny, or to suggest doubt as to the facts and truths declared in the Apostles' Creed.

6. To deny, or to treat as immaterial, belief in the Creed in which at every regular Service of the Church both Minister and people profess to believe, is to trifle with words and cannot but expose us to the suspicion and the danger of dishonesty and unreality. Honesty in the use of language—to say what we mean and to mean what we say—is not least important with regard to religious language (and especially in our approach to Almighty God), however imperfect to express divine realities we may recognize human words to be. To explain away the statement, "Conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary," as if it referred to a birth in the ordinary way, of two human parents, under perhaps exceptionally holy conditions, is plainly an abuse

of language. An ordinary birth could not have been so described, nor can the words of the Creed fairly be so understood.

7. Objections to the doctrine of the Virgin Birth, or to the bodily Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, are not only contrary to the Christian tradition, but have been abundantly dealt with by the best scholarship of the day.

8. It is not the fact of the Virgin Birth that makes us believe in our Lord as God; but our belief in Him as God makes reasonable and natural our acceptance of the fact of the Virgin Birth as declared in the Scriptures and as confessed in the Creed from the earliest times.

9. The Creed witnesses to the deliberate and determined purpose of the Church not to explain but to proclaim the fact that the Jesus of history is none other than God and Saviour, on Whom and on faith in Whom depends the whole world's hope of redemption and salvation.

10. So far from imposing fetters on our thought, the Creeds, with their simple statement of great truths and facts without elaborate philosophical disquisitions, give us a point of departure for free thought and speculation on the meaning and consequences of the facts revealed by God. The Truth is never a barrier to thought. In belief, as in life, it is the Truth that makes us free.

## THE CREED OF PRESBYTERIANS <sup>1</sup>

Every candidate for the ministry of the Presbyterian Church is required to answer the following question, put to him by the Presbytery when he comes up for licensure: "Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Scriptures?"

<sup>1</sup> By Rev. Clarence E. Macartney, Philadelphia. *Christian Work*. 115: 27-9. July 21, 1923.

There could be no more solemn obligation than that of this vow. If the candidate take it ignorantly, he does injury to the church. If he take it dishonestly, he lies not only to man but to God. There are two general principles by which men interpret vows and confessions of faith. These are, first, the plain historical meaning of the words; and second, the intention of the party imposing the oath or requiring the profession. With these two principles in mind, let us now see what is meant when a man says that he sincerely receives and adopts the Confession of Faith. There are three ways in which the vow has been interpreted:

1. That the candidate assents to every proposition contained in the Confession of Faith. Very few have ever so taken it. I doubt if there is a man in the church today who so receives the Confession of Faith. The Confession deals with a great number of subjects, and some of these subjects, while most important, have little or nothing to do with the system of doctrine taught in the Bible. The framers of the Westminster standards dealt not only with the changeless themes of salvation and grace, but they touched upon problems which arose out of the religious and political conditions of the day. They were men who were determined to save England from prelacy and popery. It is not strange then that we find in the chapter on the church they added to the sufficient confession that "There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ," the statement that the "Pope of Rome is not the head of the church, but is that anti-Christ, the man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God." The papal system undoubtedly has had in it much that is anti-Christian, but probably few men in the Presbyterian ministry are agreed that the Pope is definitely and exclusively the man of sin, the son of perdition, the anti-Christ of the Bible. The fear of prelacy and of popery is shown again in the clauses dealing with magistrates and civil rulers, which asserted the right of

the civil magistrate to use force in the suppression of heresies and blasphemies and corruptions in worship. But when the Synod of Philadelphia adopted the Confession of Faith it put itself on record as not accepting the clause on the powers of the magistrate. When the General Assembly was constituted in 1788 this clause of the Confession (XXIII, 3) was revised so that, as it now stands, the church declares merely that it is the duty of the civil authorities to protect all churches in the freedom of their worship.

The chapter on Marriage and Divorce deals with questions which are not a part of the system of doctrine taught in the Bible. This chapter recognizes wilful desertion as a ground for divorce and remarriage. But there are many ministers in our church who do not agree to this; they recognize but one cause for divorce—adultery. If this chapter were strictly enforced it would bar a man from marrying his deceased wife's sister, for the chapter declares that there may be no marriage within the degrees of consanguinity and affinity forbidden in the Word, and the 18th chapter of Leviticus is referred to as a part of the Word's teaching on that subject. These are instances of how the confession deals with subjects which are not vital to the system of doctrine taught in the Bible. The church has never refused ordination to a man because he did not believe that the Pope is anti-Christ, or that there is but one ground for divorce, or that a man may marry his deceased wife's sister, nor has any minister ever been excommunicated for holding such views.

2. That the candidate adopts the Confession of Faith as containing the "substance" of doctrine taught in the Scriptures. This term "substance of doctrine" is that used by Charles Hodge in his book on "Church Polity," and is perhaps as good a term as can be found to describe the latitudinarian interpretation of the Confession of Faith so prevalent today and which threatens the very existence of the Presbyterian church. Another term em-



ployed in defending and describing this interpretation of the creed is "essential and necessary articles." This is a phrase borrowed from the so-called Adopting Act of the Synod of Philadelphia in 1729. In this preliminary act the Synod declared that "all the ministers of this Synod or that shall hereafter be admitted to this Synod, shall declare their agreement in and approbation of the Confession of Faith, with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, as being in *all the essential and necessary articles*, good forms of sound words and systems of Christian doctrine, and do also adopt the said confession and catechisms as the confession of our faith."

There are those who have maintained that this adopting act gives to the candidate for the Presbyterian ministry a very wide liberty in taking the ordination vow. But what were those articles which the Synod of Philadelphia considered as non-essential? The discussions of the day on which the confession was finally adopted show that what troubled the Synod was the clauses about the powers of civil magistrates as set forth in chapters 20 and 23. At the afternoon session the Synod formally adopted the Confession of Faith, excepting the articles on magistrates. But, with the exception of those articles, the Confession of Faith was ratified and adopted. This fundamental act has never been abrogated. When the present constitution of the church was adopted in 1788 the Confession of Faith was adopted as a part of that constitution, the only changes being the revision of the articles dealing with the powers of the civil magistrates and synods and councils.

From the beginning there were some who held that the Adopting Act of 1729 gave the candidate the liberty of taking the Confession of Faith in so far as he considered it to state the "articles essential to Christianity," and rejecting all else. This point of view at once produced confusion and controversy, but the Synod has always made it clear in its deliverances on the subject that

by the adoption of the confession something more was meant than a mere subscription to those doctrines which the candidate regarded as "essential to Christianity." The Rev. Mr. Harkness was suspended from the ministry for doctrinal errors in spite of his plea that the Synod required only the adoption of the essential doctrines of Christianity. Repeatedly the Synod put itself on record as repudiating this lax interpretation of the Confession of Faith, declaring that the Synod never intended that the confession should be adopted only in those articles essential to Christianity.

But why has the Presbyterian church never considered it sufficient that its candidates should say they receive the Confession of Faith as containing the "substance" of doctrine taught in the Scriptures, or as containing the doctrines "essential to Christianity"? What more could be desired than the adoption on the part of the candidate of "essential" Christianity? The reason why the Presbyterian church has never permitted this interpretation of the confession is evident when one considers the great variety of Christian beliefs or lack of beliefs, which such an interpretation would sanction. Who is to say what is the "substance" of doctrine taught in the Scriptures and what the essential doctrines of Christianity are? Is this to be left entirely to the man taking the vow? Or is the church which imposes the vow to have something to say on the subject? In some of the presbyteries of the Presbyterian church there is a practical recognition of the principle that the candidate alone is to be the judge of what is essential, and every year the report of the examinations of candidates in these presbyteries shows that "essential" doctrines are becoming fewer and fewer.

Let us see what this latitudinarian interpretation would lead to. Here is a candidate for the ministry who believes that the only essential doctrine of Christianity is the doctrine of God. This doctrine he finds stated in the Confession of Faith. He rejects that part of the

chapter which speaks of God the Trinity, but accepts the rest. All the great doctrines about sin and grace and redemption through Christ this man rejects. But since the Confession of Faith does contain a statement about God, and since he regards that doctrine of God as the only essential doctrine, therefore he can sincerely say that he receives the Confession of Faith as containing the system of doctrine—essential doctrine—taught in the Scriptures. Another man might go a little farther and say that the doctrine of Christ as the Son of God was the one essential doctrine. He rejects the whole mediatorial and redemptive work of Christ, but since he believes that Christ is the Son of God, and since he thinks it the only essential doctrine, and since he finds it stated in the Confession of Faith, he claims that in all sincerity he can adopt and receive the Confession of Faith. As a result of this false principle we have now in the Presbyterian ministry men who undoubtedly reject, or “refuse to affirm,” certain doctrines which the Presbyterian church has always declared to be essential to Christianity. The last General Assembly, following the declarations of two previous assemblies, declared that the infallibility of the Bible, the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, His sacrificial death, His bodily resurrection, and that He worked miracles, were doctrines of the Presbyterian church, and doctrines essential to Christianity. But now it is apparent that there are not a few men in the ministry of the Presbyterian church who reject or refuse to affirm these doctrines, and yet claim their right to hold Presbyterian orders and confess a sincere loyalty to the church, upon the ground that they took, and now hold, the Confession of Faith as containing the doctrines which they themselves considered essential to Christianity. What the church has declared by way of interpreting its creed appears to make no difference.

If this is to be the principle upon which the creed is taken, who then is barred from the Presbyterian ministry? Here, for example, are two men, A and B. A be-

believes in the virgin birth of Christ, His sacrificial and expiatory death on the cross, His bodily resurrection and ascension, and His personal return to judge men and angels. All these doctrines are admittedly taught in the Confession of Faith. A believes that they are necessary and essential parts of the system of the doctrine taught in the Bible. When A, therefore, says that he sincerely accepts and receives the Confession of Faith as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Bible he takes those doctrines. But now B comes forward. B knows that the Confession of Faith teaches that Christ was virgin born, that He rose bodily from the dead, that He died a substitutionary death on Calvary, and that He will come again to judge men and angels. But B does not himself believe these doctrines, nor does he believe that they are essential truths of the Christian religion as taught in the Bible. But the Confession of Faith does contain statements about God and about Christ and sin which he accepts. B regards these alone as the necessary and essential doctrines. Therefore B as well as A says that he sincerely receives the Confession of Faith as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Bible.

It will be plain to the reader that if such a loose and easy interpretation of the ordination vow is permitted there is no object whatever in having a creed or a confession, for with such a standard of interpretation any one from a Deist to a Roman Catholic, could subscribe to our confession. Such a principle would reduce the Confession of Faith to a "scrap of paper." But since a creed was carefully drawn up and adopted by the founders of the Presbyterian church, the object certainly was not to make it possible that men holding any and every view about Christ and the Gospel should stand and preach in Presbyterian pulpits.

3. That the candidate receives the Confession of Faith as containing the "system" of doctrine taught in the Bible. The use of the word system shows that what is meant is more than an acceptance of isolated sections,



or fragments, or sundry doctrinal statements in the confession, but a certain logical and defined body of the Scriptural truths of redemption. Doctrines about vows, worship, oaths, Sabbaths, magistrates, sacraments, the state of the dead, are all in the Confession of Faith; but they plainly are not peculiar to the system of truth expounded in the Confession of Faith. No one can read through the Confession of Faith without being impressed with the fact that the authors of this document believed that God had made a great revelation, culminating in Jesus Christ, for the salvation of the world, and the first purpose of the confession is to state the great facts of that revelation and the interpretations of those facts. Hence the use of the word "system."

It was undoubtedly the purpose of the Westminster divines to state and defend in orderly fashion the principles and the doctrines of what is commonly called the "Reformed" theology as distinguished from the Roman, and also from the Lutheran and the Arminian. But the Confession of Faith stands upon a massive base. It does differentiate between the Reformed and the Lutheran idea of the sacraments and the Catholic and the Protestant view of the Bible and the church, and the Arminian and the Reformed view of sin and salvation. But underneath all that, the Confession of Faith gives grand and imperishable expression to the truths of our common Christianity, the faith once for all delivered unto the saints. It is these truths which are being assailed today by men outside the church, and, most effectively, by men in the church.

And what are these truths as set forth in the Confession of Faith? We are not thinking of any Presbyterian peculiarities, but what Chalmers in his splendid way called the "grand particularities" of the Christian faith, and without which there is no Christian faith. I would put the matter on the broadest possible ground, and say that when the ordination vow requires a man to declare his acceptance of the Confession of Faith as con-



taining the system of doctrine taught in the Bible, it means that the Presbyterian church requires of all its ministers that they shall accept all that the Confession of Faith says about Jesus Christ as truth taught in the Bible. And what does the Confession of Faith say about Jesus Christ? It says that He is God, the second person of the adorable Trinity. It says that man, having sinned and fallen, Christ became his Mediator and Redeemer, and that in the discharge of that office He took upon Himself our human nature, yet without sin, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary; that as God-man He executed the office of a mediator and redeemer, taking our place as sinners and enduring grievous torments of soul and sufferings of body, and death itself; after which He arose from the dead, with the same body with which He suffered, with which also He ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of His Father, making intercession; and shall return to "judge men and angels, at the end of the world." These are the great outstanding facts about Christ taught in the Confession of Faith, and taught in the New Testament. They constitute the foundation upon which stands the Christian church. The ordination vow, both historically interpreted and as put to candidates by the presbyteries, means that these facts and truths are a necessary part of the truth of the Bible and of Christianity. No man who denies any of these facts about Jesus Christ has a right to say that he sincerely receives and accepts the Confession of Faith, for he does not. He denies it. Christ is the one great fact and doctrine of the Confession of Faith, and Christ means those facts, and the truths founded upon these facts, which we have in the New Testament. We have Christ in the New Testament, and outside of that silence and darkness.

In standing by their Confession of Faith, Presbyterians are not putting up barriers in the path that leads to the church or to the Kingdom of God. They are

ready to receive into the church all those whom they believe Christ will receive into His Kingdom. They are not striving for medieval dogmas or outworn interpretations of theology. They are striving for the Christ of the New Testament. Because of its genuine solidity and unfaltering loyalty to Jesus Christ, the creed of the Presbyterians has never failed to attract the scorn and contempt and ridicule of those who do not like the facts of the New Testament and the Christ those facts present to a lost world. It is easier to attack a church, a creed, a denomination, a confession, than it is to attack directly Christ and the Gospels. The Presbyterian church stands by its creed because that creed stands by Jesus Christ. We do not attempt to hide from ourselves the sad and humiliating fact that we have ministers in our pulpits who are not loyal to the Confession of Faith, in that they either will not affirm or openly deny certain facts of Christ related in the New Testament and stated and explained in the Confession of Faith. Although just at present the vocal part of the church, they are a very small part. Loyal men in the church will do all they can to persuade them of the inconsistency of their position, so that they shall quietly withdraw. But if they do not withdraw, and if they persist in their defiance of the church, then, if the Presbyterian church is to endure, it must proceed against them. No church can endure half rationalistic and half evangelical. Nor can there be any true peace with these two parties in the same church. How can two walk together except they be agreed?

In the present crisis in the Protestant church the Presbyterian church, by reason of its historic position and its magnificent statement of Christian truth in the Confession of Faith, is destined to be the leader in the conflict. Men of all churches will rally about its ancient banner and take refuge in its great deliverances. The Presbyterian church has come to the kingdom for such an hour as this! Never in its long history has the Presbyterian church had a greater opportunity to serve the

Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us pray that the church shall have the faith and the courage to embrace that opportunity. When the storm has passed the Presbyterian church will stand to proclaim to mankind those great truths of divine revelation to which our fathers witnessed with their intellect, confessed with their faith, for which they suffered and died, and which are the alone hope of a lost and fallen world.

### A MESSAGE ON THE PRESENT SITUATION IN THE CHURCH <sup>1</sup>

*Stand fast in the faith.*—I Cor. 16: 13.

*"Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you, a reason of the hope that is in you."*—I St. Peter 3: 15.

*"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."*—I Cor. 3: 11.

There has been, during the past few weeks, much public discussion of matters affecting the faith and life of the church.

We have had in time past discussions upon questions of lesser moment—questions of ritual, of Biblical criticism, of speculative theology within the sphere of that wide liberty which this church allows. But the questions which are now before us are different.

They touch the very soul and center of our faith as Christians. They relate to the person of our Divine Lord Himself, His supernatural birth, His bodily resurrection, His ascension into heaven. Men are right in feeling the importance of the present questions. These are not matters of doctrinal detail or opinion. They are matters of life or death to the Christian religion. They are the basic facts upon which our faith in Christ rests, without which the Gospel would cease to have reality or meaning.

Christianity stands or falls with the facts about Jesus Christ as declared in the creed and in the Scriptures.

<sup>1</sup> By the Rt. Rev. William T. Manning, D.D., LL.D., Bishop of New York. Christian Work. 116: 239-43. February 23, 1924.

If these things did not happen, Christianity has no basis whatever, the whole message of the New Testament is a mistake. It is these great central realities of the Christian faith which are now being questioned within the church itself.

I think I can say that, during the course of these discussions, I have been in no haste to speak. I speak now with deep realization of my responsibility, and only because it seems to be my duty. I want to speak only in that spirit which should guide and rule us in the church. It is required of one in the Bishop's office that he shall speak the truth in love, but it is required also that he shall speak it faithfully and without fear.

What I wish to do, and feel it my duty to do, is to declare plainly what is the faith which this church holds, and what is the obligation to teach the faith which rests upon those of us who hold office as her ministers. Let me, at the outset, refer to one matter as to which I feel that I must express myself once for all.

It has been intimated to me, and to the public, that a clear position on my part upon these questions might result in financial loss to the work of the diocese, and especially to the campaign now commencing for the building of the cathedral. I do not believe it. But if this suggestion were true my answer would be that a thousand cathedrals are of less importance than one foundation fact of the Christian faith. Better that the cathedral should never be built than that a bishop of this church should fail to bear his witness for the full truth of Jesus Christ.

In considering the present questions it should be emphasized and kept always in mind that the issue involved is not liberty of conscience or freedom of thought. There is no restriction upon the conscience or the liberty of any of us. Each one of us is free to follow the truth as he sees it, and to follow it wherever it may lead him.

The issue is whether those of us who, of our own free choice, have accepted office as ministers of this

church are under obligation to teach the faith which this church holds.

Three points I must refer to briefly in order to make the situation clear:

1. Few, if any of us, in this church hold the position of those who are popularly described as Fundamentalists. We believe in the widest freedom of inquiry and of scholarly research. We welcome eagerly all the light that science and scholarship can give. We are in no fear that truth, from any source, will conflict with the truth made known to us in Christ. We believe fully in applying modern knowledge to religion, but we insist that the power of God and His revelation of Himself shall not be limited by the measure of our human reason or of our necessarily partial knowledge of the physical order.

2. Our standard of belief is great and essential, but very brief and simple. We do not require any mechanical theory as to the inspiration of the Scriptures. We do not demand allegiance to any elaborate doctrinal systems of a past age, such as those contained in the confessions of faith, which were drawn up in the sixteenth century. The Thirty-nine Articles are not, and have never been, our creed. The only formal doctrinal requirement of one who enters this church is acceptance of the Apostles' Creed, which contains the great facts about our Lord Jesus Christ as these facts are declared in the Scriptures and as they have been held and taught by the whole Christian church from the beginning.

3. It should be unnecessary to say that the present discussions involve no issue whatever between "high" and "low" church views. The Apostles' Creed is neither "high church" nor "low church." It is the faith itself which is in question. The Apostles' Creed is the creed of the church herself, and of all the members of the church alike.

In these recent discussions three questions have been clearly raised:

1. Does this church believe and teach the Gospel of



Christ as divinely given from above, a supernatural revelation from God, which is vital to mankind and on which the hope of the world depends? Or does this church regard the Gospel as the product of human reason and speculation?

2. Are the ministers of this church under obligation to uphold and teach the Christian faith as contained in the creeds and the Scriptures? Or are they engaged only in a search after truth and commissioned to teach whatever their own private opinions may dictate?

3. What latitude of interpretation have we in our acceptance and teaching of the church's creed, and is there some necessary limit to what may legitimately be called interpretation?

No one can be in any doubt as to the answer to the first question. This church believes and proclaims the fact that "the Jesus of history is none other than God and Saviour on Whom, and on faith in Whom, depends the whole world's hope of redemption and salvation."

With the apostles, with the New Testament, with the whole Christian church from the first this church believes that it was the Eternal One Himself, "God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God," "Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man." The very message of the Gospel is that it was God who came Himself in the person of Jesus Christ to dwell among men. This is the "good news" which the church proclaimed in the beginning and which has brought life and hope to men ever since.

To reject the supernatural from the Gospel is to reject the Gospel itself. Our religion as Christians is not a matter of mere belief in doctrines or of assent to intellectual propositions. It is a matter of relationship with the risen and reigning Christ. This is the very meaning of our religion. It means that we believe in Him, pray to Him, follow Him, look to Him as our

Saviour and our Lord. Only if He is God can He stand in this relation to us. Only if He is God can He have any real place in our lives at all. Only if He is God can we explain or justify the prayers, the hymns, the sacraments, the whole faith and worship of this church. We believe in Jesus Christ, crucified for our sakes, risen and ascended. We believe in Him not only as He was here on earth, but as He is now at the right hand of God. We believe not only in Christ the Teacher, but in Christ the Redeemer, and Lord, and Judge, to whom is given all power in heaven and in earth.

This is the Gospel as this church has received it. This is the Gospel with which the Christian church is put in trust by her Lord and Head, and which she is commanded to preach to all the world.

Let us now consider the second question which has been raised, "Are the ministers of this church under obligation to uphold and teach the Christian faith as the church holds it, and as it is contained in the creeds and the Scriptures?"

The Pastoral Letter recently put forth by the House of Bishops says, "It is irreconcilable with the vows voluntarily made at ordination for a minister of this church to deny or to suggest doubt as to the facts and truths declared in the Apostles' Creed." Anyone who will read the services for the ordination of ministers will, I think, recognize that this statement is true, and that the bishops were bound so to declare. At the service for the ordering of priests each one gives his pledge that he will "minister the doctrine, and sacraments, and the discipline of Christ as the Lord hath commanded and as this church hath received the same." And in addition to the pledges which he makes in the ordination service every minister of this church, bishop, priest or deacon is required, before his ordination, to make and sign the following declaration: "I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God, and I do solemnly engage to conform to the doctrine, discipline

and worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America."

Questions as to the history of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds need not here be considered. Beyond all question, these two creeds contain the doctrine of this church as to our Lord Jesus Christ. At every baptism the minister is required to ask the person who comes to be baptized, "Dost thou believe all the articles of the Christian faith as contained in the Apostles' Creed?" At every service of public worship the minister and people are required solemnly to repeat together either this or the Nicene Creed. The Eighth Article of Religion says: "The Nicene Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed; for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture."

The formularies of this church could not, I think, make it more clear that those of us who hold office as her ministers are under obligation to teach the Christian faith as contained in the creeds and the Scriptures.

On this understanding each one of us received, and holds, his commission. So long as we continue in the teaching office of this church this obligation rests upon us. This is not an obligation which the bishops impose upon the clergy, or from which any bishop may relieve the clergy. It is an obligation which the church lays upon all of us alike, and which we have accepted freely and of our own choice.

As Bishop Henry C. Potter wrote in his great charge to the clergy and laity, entitled "Law and Loyalty," which I wish every member of this diocese would read:

The church in this land has her standards of faith embodied in the Creed, and Offices, and Articles, which, taken together with Holy Scripture, are her Rule of Faith. In the interpretation of these there has always been and there always will be, a certain latitude of construction, for which every wise man will be devoutly thankful. But that that latitude exists is no more certain than that it has its limits, and that the transgression of these limits, by whatever ingenuity it has been accomplished, has wrought only evil, in lowering the moral tone of the church,

and in debilitating the individual conscience, is, I think, no less certain.

Those are the words of one who was no partisan, no narrow ecclesiastic, but a man of singularly broad sympathies and wide vision. And after speaking of the great liberty properly enjoyed by the clergy, Bishop Potter continues:

But at this point there enter those associated obligations which are a part of the compact whereby any individual is admitted into a fellowship, and clothed, it may be, with privileges; and dignities, which he could not enjoy without it. These are not conferred upon him unconditionally. So far as they are those of men in holy orders they are qualified by very definite obligations—obligations which cannot be disregarded, or lightly construed, without, I maintain, sooner or later, weakening all sense of moral obligation.

It should be clearly recognized that the Pastoral Letter of the House of Bishops deals with the responsibilities of the clergy as official teachers of the church, rather than with the responsibilities of the laity, which are of a different degree and less formal.

There is an important and manifest difference between the position of the laity and the clergy in these matters. There has never been in this church, and there certainly is not now, a desire to be over rigid or exacting with the laity in matters of doctrine. And no one among us, I believe, would feel anything but brotherly sympathy with a minister of the church troubled with doubts which may be only temporary, which most of us have had in one form or another, and which usually disappear with growth in spiritual experience and in knowledge. But for a bishop or other minister openly to deny or cast doubt upon or suggest doubts to others as to the church's faith is a different matter. The church must hold up before men the full faith of Jesus Christ, and she must look to her official ministers to teach this faith as she herself believes and has received it.

We come now to the third question which has been raised by these discussions, "What latitude of interpre-



tation have we in our acceptance and teaching of the church's creed, and is there some necessary limit to what may legitimately be called interpretation?"

There has always been great liberty of thought and opinion in this church, and none of us would be willing to have it otherwise. There is no church in Christendom which is so comprehensive as the one in which we serve. There is wide room for differences of apprehension and interpretation of the articles of the creed, but manifestly this liberty has its limits. To interpret means to expound, to show the meaning of, to elucidate.

That, surely, cannot be called interpretation which is in reality a denial or a rejection of the fact which the words of the creed are evidently intended to declare. We are not at liberty to interpret plain and clear affirmations to mean their exact opposites. That is to play with language. Let me quote the words of that clear teacher of the faith, the late Dr. William Reed Huntington, in his volume of sermons, "A Good Shepherd," published in 1906:

Doubtless recent discovery has made it absolutely necessary to interpret certain articles of the Christian faith afresh, to translate, so to speak, the language in which they are clothed, into the phraseology of to-day. But let us be exceedingly careful upon two points, first, never to accept any interpretation of the Creed that puts less meaning into it than it held for us before, such explanations as explain away the thing to be explained, and secondly, never to allow an interpretation to pass over into a negation. Interpret as much as you please, as long as you know that you are holding on to the reality which the Creed undertakes to teach; but, as you value your soul, never let anybody, clerical or lay, persuade you to say, "I believe" with respect to any statement which you know in your heart you deny. Nothing has happened yet in the world of discovery and research to make it impossible for an honest man rightly informed as to the meaning of the Apostles' Creed, to repeat *ex animo* the twelve affirmations therein contained, unless indeed, one has assumed in advance that things out of the common never have occurred, or can occur. But if we cannot prove the so called miraculous, neither can we disprove it. The foremost of the Agnostics acknowledged as much as that. And if any think that they can build a religion upon a denial of the statements made in the Creed, let them try.



There is one sentence in that statement of Dr. Huntington's which should be especially emphasized: "Nothing has happened yet in the world of discovery and research to make it impossible for an honest man, rightly informed as to the meaning of the Apostles' Creed, to repeat *ex animo* the twelve affirmations therein contained."

These words are as true today as when they were written. There has been no discovery of science or of scholarship which has made belief more difficult. On the contrary, there has been much to lead strongly in the direction of belief.

Nothing that is new has been suggested in these recent discussions. There is nothing that is modern in this present movement. The difficulties presented are, most of them, as old as Christianity itself. In every age the church has met, and answered, these same objections to her faith. The serious feature of the present situation is the propagation of these doubts by some of those who hold office in the ministry of the church.

It is said by some that the church already allows an interpretation which denies the fact in the case of some articles of the creed, and must, therefore, allow the same liberty in the case of other articles. This is incorrect and shows lack of clear thought upon the matter. There is no article of the creed as to which the church allows an interpretation which denies the fact. Permitting all lawful liberty of interpretation and explanation in the case of every article, this church calls upon all her clergy and people to believe *the fact* that our Lord went into the place of departed spirits, *the fact* that He is now at the right hand of God, *the fact* that He will one day come again in judgment, and she certainly calls upon us to believe, and expects us to believe and teach, *the fact* that He Who for our sakes came down from heaven was born of the Virgin Mary, *the fact* of His bodily resurrection from the tomb, and *the fact* of His return to the place

which He had, before the worlds were, at the right hand of the Father.

A most significant statement upon this question of interpretation has just been published, signed by twenty-seven leading Unitarian ministers of Boston and elsewhere. They, of course, do not accept the Apostles' Creed. But upon this point of legitimate interpretation they use the following serious words:

With all courtesy and considerateness let us make it plain that religious teachers who play with words in the most solemn relations of life, who make their creeds mean what they were not originally intended to mean, or mentally reject a formula of belief while outwardly repeating it, cannot expect to retain the allegiance of men who are accustomed to straight thinking and square dealing.

This statement by eminent Unitarian ministers agrees precisely with the Pastoral Letter of the House of Bishops upon this point, and is indeed strikingly similar to that letter in its language.

Can anyone question the truth of the following declaration in the Pastoral Letter:

To explain away the statement "Conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary" as if it referred to a birth in the ordinary way, of two human parents, under perhaps exceptionally holy conditions, is plainly an abuse of language. An ordinary birth could not have been so described, nor can the words of the Creed fairly be so understood.

We are told today that belief in the virgin birth is unimportant. But the church in whose name we speak, does not so teach. Brief as the summary of her essential faith is, the church has included in it the affirmation "born of the Virgin Mary." Throughout her worship, as in the Te Deum and the proper preface for the Christmas season, she emphasizes this great truth.

Nothing, indeed, which touches the fact of our Lord's Godhead can be unimportant. He in Whom we believe did not begin His life in Bethlehem. We cannot say that He could have taken our nature upon Him in no other way than that which the Scriptures record. But if we

believe in Him as eternal, pre-existent God becoming man, and think deeply enough upon this stupendous fact, so far from finding difficulty in the account of His birth given in the Scriptures, we find that this alone can satisfy our minds, as Dr. Du Bose has shown in his great book, "The Gospel in the Gospels."

The importance of this article of the creed is indicated by the fact that wherever belief in the virgin birth becomes weak, belief seems also to become weak in the resurrection and ascension of our Lord. This present movement does not mean only rejection of the virgin birth, or of this or that miracle of the Gospel. As Bishop Gore has so ably shown, it has its roots in a determined presupposition against the possibility of miracle, against the supernatural as such, and so against the very message of the Gospel as declared in the New Testament. A Christ Who was not born of the Virgin, Who did not rise in the body on the third day, and Who did not ascend into heaven, is not the Christ of the New Testament, not the Christ in Whom the church believes and has always believed.

The creed is all of one piece. It all centers in the one supreme truth of the deity of Jesus Christ. We cannot deny or set aside one of its articles without injuring or endangering the whole. The occurrences of the past few weeks have, I think, helped to make this clear. Conferences are being held for the full and careful consideration of these issues. But while these conferences are in progress a statement still more gravely disturbing in its character than those previously made has been sent out from one of our theological seminaries in a pamphlet widely distributed. It is there proposed that the creed of the church shall now be made permissive, to be believed and taught or not as different congregations or their clergy may decide. It is difficult to understand how such a proposal can be made by those who are ministers and teachers in this church. It would seem that those who make it cannot fully realize what it is

that they suggest. Why should the church retain her creed at all, if she is ready to relegate it to a merely optional use?

Far, indeed, from this proposal is the teaching of Phillips Brooks in his great sermon on "Keeping the Faith," which I wish might be read by everyone throughout the church:

The first thing that strikes us [Bishop Brooks says] is that when St. Paul said that he had kept the faith he evidently believed that there was a faith to keep. . . . To him the truth which he believed was not a doctrine which he had discovered, but the faith which he had kept. The faith was a body of truth given to him which he had to hold, and to use, and to apply, but which he had not made, and was not to improve. . . . Our Creed, our credo, anything which we call by such a sacred name, is not what we have thought, but what our Lord has told us. The true Creed must come down from above and not out from within.

If this church should cease to hold the truth about Jesus Christ, as declared in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, she would cease to be the same church that she has been, she would cut herself off from her own past and from fellowship with the rest of the Anglican communion, she would repudiate her heritage as a part of the one Catholic and Apostolic church throughout the world.

We need have no fear as to the position of the church upon the questions which have been raised. Painful, and in some ways harmful, as the recent discussions have been, they have helped to make the situation clear, and their chief result will be to arouse many to more earnest thought and to fuller faith in Jesus Christ, God and Saviour of us all.

It is our duty, clergy and laity alike, to study and think out clearly the sure grounds of our faith so that, as St. Peter expresses it, we may be ready to give to every man that asketh "a reason of the hope that is in us."

It is not changes in the creed that we need today, but deeper and more personal faith in Jesus Christ. He

Who, for us men, came down from heaven is not One for us merely to theorize and speculate about. If His claims are true, He is One for us to follow and worship. If we are to know His truth we must, as He says, become as little children. We must receive Him in the spirit of humility, not of self-assertion and intellectual pride. His message does not contradict our reason, but it does infinitely transcend it. We can learn the full meaning of His truth only on our knees.

We are told often that, in her teaching, the church must consider the young men and women of the present day. We must indeed consider them. It is for the young people of our time and for the coming generation that I would especially speak. We must give them the Gospel of Christ in all its divine reality and truth, not some philosophic restatement of the Christian religion, reduced, rationalized and deprived of the very secret of its power. Let us beware how we give the impression, the wholly wrong and false impression, to our young people that the great facts and truths of the creed are unimportant, or that they are unworthy of belief. Let us sympathize wholly with those of the younger generation and stand with them in their desire to be completely loyal to truth, but let us help them to see the supreme truth in Jesus Christ, "the same yesterday, and today, and forever." If some of them have doubts, we shall help them by showing them the full truth of the Gospel, not by offering them this truth in reduced and weakened form. It is the work of the church to lift the thought of the time up to the level of her divine message, not to bring her message down to the level of the thought of the time.

Brethren, it all comes back to the one question, "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?"

If by the incarnation, when we use that term, we mean only that God was in Christ in the same way that He is in all of us, if Jesus Christ is, after all, only a man in whom the spirit of God was especially manifest,



then the creed, and with it the church's whole faith and worship, become foolish, unmeaning, superstitious, as some say that they are.

But if, on the other hand, we believe in Jesus Christ as this church believes in Him there is no word in the creed which need cause us doubt or difficulty.

These two great, simple creeds, the Apostles' and the Nicene, are the statement of the Christian faith as it has been held and taught by the whole Christian church throughout the world from the beginning, as it is contained in the Scriptures, as it is believed, and has always been believed by this church. They are the declaration of the faith in which our fathers and mothers have lived and died, in which our children have been baptized and confirmed and brought to the holy communion, by which our Christian civilization has been formed, and upon which it depends for its inspiration, its guidance and its further progress.

And my message to you, and to the clergy and people of this diocese, is expressed in those words of St. Paul and St. Peter which come to us across the whole life of the church from the first days, and which are as full of meaning today as when the two apostles wrote them: "Stand fast in the faith." "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you, a reason of the hope that is in you." "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

### A UNITARIAN VIEW <sup>1</sup>

These modern liberals are in no small degree reaffirming the principles in defense of which the Unitarian pioneers were obliged, for honor's sake, to go apart and

<sup>1</sup> From Christian Register. 103: 29. January 10, 1924. A Fraternal Letter to the Churches.

after the way which men call heresy worship the God of their fathers. We rejoice that these earnest truth-seekers have accepted so many of the new conclusions of criticism and science, and that they are bravely asserting their right to liberty of thought and speech. We acclaim the abundant learning and progressive spirit of the liberal leaders, especially of those who accept without qualification the verified findings of modern scholarship, and we want in every way to make them aware of our appreciation and our fraternal good-will.

Let us nevertheless assert for ourselves and our brethren the necessity of clear and scrupulous honesty in matters of faith. Let us affirm as the fruit of our experience that methods of compromise can never point the way to the truth that makes men free. Let us make plain that there cannot be any halfway stopping-places in the acceptance or the rejection of disputed doctrines. Either the Bible is inerrant or it is not; either the fall of man is a fact or it is a myth; either the law of evolution is everywhere valid or it is the baseless fabric of a dream. With all courtesy and considerateness let us make it plain that religious teachers who play with words in the most solemn relations of life, who make their creeds mean what they were not originally intended to mean, or mentally reject a formula of belief while outwardly repeating it, cannot expect to retain the allegiance of men who are accustomed to straight thinking and square dealing. "In proportion," said Channing, "as a man suppresses his convictions in order to save his orthodoxy from suspicion, or distorts language from its common use that he may stand well with his party, in that proportion he clouds and degrades his intellect as well as undermines the integrity of his character."



## B. FOR THE RIGHT OF THE MODERN- ISTS TO REMAIN

### BRIEF STATEMENTS<sup>1</sup>

DR. WILLIAM E. BARTON, CONGREGATIONALIST:

The fifteenth chapter of Acts is an authoritative declaration that modernism and fundamentalism are both legitimate within the church, provided each exercises toward the other a spirit of Christian love. Neither fundamentalism availeth anything nor modernism, but faith working by love. The agreement reached in that chapter concerning a willingness to admit to equal fellowship in the church men of widely varying opinion and practice is as valid today as when it was written.

DR. HENRY SLOANE COFFIN, OF THE MADISON AVENUE  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEW YORK:

There seems to be room for both types in the church, and each needs the other. . . . Both bear witness to God's presence with them in consecrated lives, and both belong in the one body of Christ. It is a time for mutual forbearance, for an effort calmly to understand each other; above all for the recognition that both must hold together if the church is to fulfil her task of redeeming the world to God.

<sup>1</sup> Homiletic Review. 86: 186-90. September, 1923. The Battle Within the Churches.

AN EXCLUSIVE OR AN INCLUSIVE CHURCH?<sup>1</sup>

. . . Two conceptions of the church are in conflict today in modern Protestantism, and one of the most crucial problems of America's religious life in this next generation is the decision as to which of these two ideas of the church shall triumph. We may call one the exclusive and the other the inclusive conception of the church. The exclusive conception of the church lies along lines like these: that we are the true church; that we have the true doctrines and the true practices as no other church possesses them; that we are constituted as a church just because we have these uniquely true opinions and practices; that we all in the church agree about these opinions and that when we joined the church we gave allegiance to them; that nobody has any business to belong to our church unless he agrees with us; that if there are people outside the church who disagree, they ought to be kept outside and if there are people in the church who come to disagree, they ought to be put outside. That is the exclusive idea of the church, and there are many who need no further description of it for they were brought up in it and all their youthful religious life was surrounded by its rigid sectarianism.

Over against this conception is the inclusive idea of the church, which runs along lines like these: that the Christian church ought to be the organizing center for all the Christian life of a community; that a church is not based upon theological uniformity but upon devotion to the Lord Jesus, to the life with God and man for which He stood, and to the work which He gave us to do; that wherever there are people who have that spiritual devotion, who possess that love, who want more of it, who desire to work and worship with those of kindred Christian aspirations, they belong inside the family of the Christian church.

<sup>1</sup> By Harry Emerson Fosdick. *Christianity and Progress*. p. 232-3. Copyright (1922), Fleming H. Revell Company. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.



THE COMPREHENSIVE CREED OF  
PRESBYTERIANS<sup>1</sup>

*"Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours: Whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."*—I Corinthians 3: 21-3.

. . . Carefully studying the Confession of Faith, we find clearly marked in it two strands or tendencies; the one is distinguished by its external and legal character, the other by its spiritual and vital character. Let us set each of them in an extreme form.

The one looks upon the Bible as a law book, infallible in its authority. It views God as far removed from His world and from men, coming into relation with mankind only on the basis of arbitrary action on God's part. It looks on sin as a violation of the law of God, for which one must give account to Him. Atonement it views as the satisfaction of a legal penalty; salvation means deliverance from punishment due, a restoration to good standing in the sight of the Judge. Christ is a mediator in the legal or forensic sense. His work is essentially a device whereby a certain exchange takes place, the guilt of the believer being assumed by Christ, and the righteousness of Christ being imputed to the believer. Those, and those only, are saved who have been chosen for such salvation by the sovereign will of God; "by the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death," and "their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished." The rest of mankind are utterly helpless to do anything toward salvation. Especially is it true that no one who is outside the pale of Christian knowledge can be saved in any way whatsoever, and there is a strong tendency in this strand of the

<sup>1</sup> By Rev. William P. Merrill, D.D., Brick Presbyterian Church, New York. *Christian Work*. 114: 555-8. May 5, 1923.

Confession to identify salvation with security in the life to come. "It pleased God in the beginning to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein, in the space of six days." The sin of our first parents God permitted, "having purposed to order it to his own glory." "The guilt of this sin was imputed, and the death in corruption conveyed to all their posterity." The doctrine of election is carried so far that even individuals dying in infancy are saved or not, according to whether they do or do not belong to the number of the elect. Others, not elected, never truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved. Faith means believing to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word of God.

Out of these statements there clearly emerges a consistent system of thought, rigid, severe, mechanical, legalistic. And this is what many think of as "the theology of the Presbyterian Church" to which we promise to be loyal.

But the student of this old document finds all through it another and vastly different set of ideas and beliefs. It is immensely greater in quantity than the other. It is far more strongly stated, and it is quite cheerfully inconsistent with the extreme form of the system of thought just stated. It is less precise, just because it is spiritual; for the more religious a truth is the more difficult it is to state it in precise terms.

This is what we find in the second set of ideas: Religious authority rests ultimately in the soul of man, as led and illumined by the spirit of God. "God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced, nor, by any absolute necessity of nature, determined to good or evil." The Bible is not a law book, embodying God's past decisions. It is a living book, through which God now speaks, revealing His will and His love. Our assurance of the infallible authority of God's Word comes from the Spirit of God, speaking to us as we read the Scriptures. God is not far off; He is seen in His world, He is the Lord of all life, "the alone

fountain of all being." Creation is His continuous, never-ending self-revelation. This world in which we live is nothing more nor less than the unfolding in fact of His gracious and holy purpose. Sin is alienation from God, a loss of vital connection with Him. Salvation is restoration to His fellowship through a renewal of the spiritual life. Christ is the mediator between God and man in a personal and vital sense, the Prophet, Priest and King, through Whom the grace of God enters and transforms the lives of men. The Christian experience is not a legal arrangement, but a personal matter; it is vital and warm, the life of a son in the home of a father. The church is not primarily a visible organization, but rather an invisible fellowship, a body made up of all those who know the grace of God through Christ. No one can number or know the multitude of its members, nor can anyone limit the grace of the spirit of God, who will have all men to be saved, a spirit who worketh when and where and how He pleaseth. All who die in infancy are saved through the grace of God in Christ. God freely offers in the Gospel His grace to all men. "He desires not the death of any sinner, but has provided in Christ a salvation sufficient for all, adapted to all, and freely offered in the Gospel to all, and no man is condemned except on the ground of his sin." Christ's sacrifice is not the payment of a legal debt, but an offering of the love of God made through the eternal spirit. Faith is above all "accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for eternal life." Above all particular doctrines rises the great principle that "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men." The Lord Jesus Christ is the only head of the church. The communion of the church—its fellowship—is to be extended "unto all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus." Creeds and all decisions of church bodies are to be received with reverent submission only if they are consonant with the Word of God. The spirit of God

is "the source of all good thoughts, pure desires, and holy counsels in men." It is clearly understood that any one who subscribes to this confession, subscribes only to it as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures.

*There* is a system of Christian truth to which almost any modern Christian can heartily subscribe. Here, then, in the one Confession of Faith we find these two widely divergent strains or tendencies. What are the implications of that fact? One of them certainly is very clear—that *no one* can hold with equal heartiness, to the whole Confession. If some one who holds to the first of these two forms of theology says to his brother who holds to the second, "You are disloyal because you do not emphasize this stricter part of the Confession," his brother may with even greater vigor reply, "And you are disloyal if you do not hold to this gracious, generous, catholic part of our creed." The fact is, that the truest, finest, highest loyalty which a Presbyterian can show is loyalty to that spirit which includes both elements in its creed, and so makes room for both parties in the church. It is absolutely clear, from study of this Confession, that our church, by its very nature, is based upon a compromise—a generous agreement between different schools. It is easy to see why always there have been two strong parties in the Presbyterian church, the conservative party, concerned for the preservation of orthodoxy, interested in the formal elements of the church's creed, and the liberal party, more concerned for the spiritual elements and eager for the new developments of truth. The conservative cares supremely for the preservation of doctrinal soundness; the liberal cares supremely for spiritual reality. It is an indispensable condition of a truly strong church to make room for both these elements, and our creed gives ample room for both.

Yet this is not, by any means, the whole story. We not only find in our Confession these two clearly defined theological points of view; but no doubt is left us as to



which of them the Confession itself counts most essential. The creed itself declares that no creed must be made authoritative, that always the Bible must be the rule of faith and practice, and that the creed is accepted only in so far as it is true to our best understanding of the Bible. "The supreme judge must always be the Holy Spirit, speaking in the Scriptures."

When the Presbyterian church in America formally adopted the Westminster Confession as its creed it drew up certain preliminary principles. It is well to keep in mind some of these; they are splendidly broad and strong: "That God alone is Lord of the conscience, and, therefore, the rights of private judgment in all matters that respect religion are universal and unalienable;" that truth is in order to goodness, and the great touchstone of truth its tendency to promote holiness, according to our Saviour's rule, 'By their fruits ye shall know them';" "that while it is necessary to make effectual provision that all who are admitted to be teachers should be sound in the faith, we also believe that there are truths and forms with respect to which men of good characters and principles may differ, and in all these they think it the duty, both of private Christians and societies, to exercise mutual forbearance toward each other;" "that all church power is only ministerial and declarative, that is to say, that the Holy Scriptures are that only rule of faith and manners, and that all decisions of the church should be founded upon the revealed will of God."

How can anyone question the fundamental position and policy of a church which makes such a preamble to its creed? That prince of early Presbyterians, Jonathan Dickinson, put the matter in a sentence when he said, "I have no worse opinion of the Assemblies Confession for the second article in the twentieth chapter, 'God alone is Lord of the conscience, etc.,' and I must tell you that to subscribe this article and impose the rest appears to me the most glorious contradiction."

When the American Presbyterian church was first



organized as a united body in 1729 on the basis of this Confession of Faith a statement was unanimously adopted which shows the spirit which ought to rule throughout the Presbyterian church always, and which does rule where men are loyal to the Presbyterian system. "And the Synod do solemnly agree that no one of us will traduce or use any opprobrious terms of those that differ with us in extra-essential and unnecessary points of doctrine, but treat them with the same friendship, kindness and brotherly love as if they did not differ with us in such sentiments."

If we of today, who love our Presbyterian heritage, want to be honestly and fully loyal to its best traditions and to its accepted principles, we must feel ourselves divinely called to maintain our denomination as a comprehensive body. We must always be ready to extend full rights to those men and groups that feel constrained to emphasize the narrower and stricter, more legal side of our Presbyterian creed; but we must demand exactly the same rights for the broader, modern, progressive elements in our church. It is a magnificent privilege to belong to an organization which squarely says, as a part of its creed, that we are bound to extend our Christian fellowship to all those who, in any place, call upon the name of the Lord Jesus. There is true catholicity in practice.

It happened that in 1784 a Scotch Presbyterian of the strictest sort described in a letter the Presbyterians of America, as he had come to see them. He writes, "They are composed of ministers and people from different countries; hence it is not surprising that they are not of one heart and one mind in the faith. However, it appears to be a received principle among them that whatever is disputed among the pious and learned ought not to be a term of communion in the Christian church, and hence they live generally in peace with one another, notwithstanding their jarring sentiments; and ministers of the Episcopal, Independent and Baptist communions who have a glaring appearance of piety are admitted into

their pulpits." The good man wrote that in a spirit of severe criticism. He was lamenting and ridiculing what he thought of as the laxness of the American Presbyterian church; but what he wrote is high praise. It was true then, it is true now, it always will be true of loyal Presbyterians, that they get on well together, regardless of their varying views, because they believe that the church fellowship ought to be wide enough to admit all who love the Lord Jesus Christ; and that they admit into their pulpits freely and gladly men of other communions, realizing that above all denominations is the church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Does not the world in which we stand today need a church that can be at once firm, strong, positive, and yet generous and catholic? By inheritance and by fundamental principle, we have such a church. It is our high privilege to keep it such, and to give it the best loyalty of our hearts.

When the little band of Pilgrims were about to sail from Holland in 1620 their good and gifted leader, John Robinson, spoke words of wisdom to them, in which the very spirit of our Confession of Faith takes form:

We are now ere long to part asunder, and the Lord knoweth whether I shall live to see your faces again. But whether the Lord hath appointed it or not, I charge you before God and His blessed angels to follow me no further than I have followed Christ; and if God should reveal anything to you by any other instrument of His, to be as ready to receive it as ever you were to receive any truth by my ministry; for I am very confident the Lord hath more truth and light yet to break forth out of His holy Word. I bewail the condition of the reformed churches who are come to a period in religion, and will go no further than the instruments of their reformation. The Lutherans cannot be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw; for whatever part of God's will has been imparted and revealed to Calvin they will rather die than embrace it. And the Calvinists, as you see, stick where Calvin left them. This is a misery much to be lamented; for though Luther and Calvin were precious shining lights in their times, yet God did not reveal His whole will to them; and were they living now they would be as ready and willing to embrace further light as that which they had received. I beseech you to remember your church covenant, at least that part of it whereby you promise and covenant with

God and with one another, to receive whatsoever light or truth shall be made known to you from the written Word of God.

We may well set beside these noble words a statement made by the very assembly which formed the Westminster Confession, "It is presupposed that the minister of Christ is in some measure gifted for so weighty a service by his knowledge in the whole body of theology, but most of all in the Holy Scriptures, and by the illumination of the spirit of God and other gifts of edification which (together with reading and study of the Word) he ought still to seek by prayer and a humble heart—resolving to admit and receive any truth not yet attained, whenever God shall make it known unto him."

That is the spirit of our church. It leads forward, not back. It is open to all truth; it eagerly welcomes all the light the spirit of God can give. Can we ask a better gift than that of loyalty to the true faith and the real spirit of our fathers, who would have our church follow them only as they followed Christ?

## AN AFFIRMATION DESIGNED TO SAFEGUARD THE UNITY AND LIBERTY OF THE PRES- BYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

SUBMITTED FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF ITS MINISTERS  
AND PEOPLE <sup>1</sup>

We the undersigned, ministers of the Presbyterian church in the United States of America, feel bound, in view of certain actions of the General Assembly of 1923 and of persistent attempts to divide the church and abridge its freedom, to express our conviction in matters pertaining thereto. At the outset we affirm and declare our acceptance of the Westminster Confession of Faith, as we did at our ordinations, "as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures." We

<sup>1</sup> From *Christian Work*. 116: 84-5, 95. January 19, 1924. The list of signers, here omitted is given in *Christian Work*.

sincerely hold and earnestly preach the doctrines of evangelical Christianity, in agreement with the historic testimony of the Presbyterian church in the United States of America, of which we are loyal ministers. For the maintenance of the faith of our church, the preservation of its unity and the protection of the liberties of its ministers and people, we offer this affirmation.

THE CHURCH'S GUARANTEES OF LIBERTY (I) CONCERNING THE  
INTERPRETATION OF THE CONFESSION OF FAITH

I. By its law and its history, the Presbyterian church in the United States of America safeguards the liberty of thought and teaching of its ministers. At their ordinations they "receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures." This the church has always esteemed a sufficient doctrinal subscription for its ministers. Manifestly, it does not require their assent to the very words of the Confession, or to all of its teachings, or to interpretations of the Confession by individuals or church courts. The Confession of Faith itself disclaims infallibility. Its authors would not allow this to church councils, their own included:

All synods or councils since the apostles' times, whether general or particular, may err, and many have erred; therefore, they are not to be made the rule of faith or practice, but to be used as a help in both (Conf XXXI, iii).

The Confession also expressly asserts the liberty of Christian believers and condemns the submission of the mind or conscience to any human authority:

God alone is lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to His Word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship. So that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commandments out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also (Conf. XX, ii).

The formal relation of American Presbyterianism to the Westminster Confession of Faith begins in the Adopting Act of 1729. This anticipated and provided



for dissent by individuals from portions of the confession. At the formation of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, in 1788, the Westminster Confession was adopted as the creed of the church; and at the same time the church publicly declared the significance of its organization in a document which contains these words: "There are truths and forms, with respect to which men of good characters and principles may differ. And in all these they think it the duty, both of private Christians and societies, to exercise mutual forbearance toward each other" (Declaration of Principles, v).

Of the two parts into which our church was separated from 1837 to 1870, one held that only one interpretation of certain parts of the Confession of Faith was legitimate, while the other maintained its right to dissent from this interpretation. In the Reunion of 1870 they came together on equal terms, "each recognizing the other as a sound and orthodox body." The meaning of this, as understood then and ever since, is that office-bearers in the church who maintain their liberty in the interpretation of the confession are exercising their rights guaranteed by the terms of the reunion.

A more recent reunion also is significant, that of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, in 1906. This reunion was opposed by certain members of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, on the ground that the two churches were not at one in doctrine; yet it was consummated. Thus did our church once more exemplify its historic policy of accepting theological differences within its bounds and subordinating them to recognized loyalty to Jesus Christ and united work for the Kingdom of God.

## (2) CONCERNING THE INTERPRETATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

With respect to the interpretation of the Scriptures the position of our church has been that common to Protestants. "The Supreme Judge," says the Confession



of Faith, "by whom all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men and private spirits are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture" (Conf. I, x). Accordingly, our church has held that the supreme guide in the interpretation of the Scriptures is not, as it is with Roman Catholics, ecclesiastical authority, but the Spirit of God, speaking to the Christian believer. Thus, our church lays it upon its ministers and others to read and teach the Scriptures as the Spirit of God through His manifold ministries instructs them, and to receive all truth which from time to time He causes to break forth from the Scriptures.

There is no assertion in the Scriptures that their writers were kept "from error." The Confession of Faith does not make this assertion, and it is significant that this assertion is not to be found in the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed or in any of the great Reformation confessions. The doctrine of inerrancy, intended to enhance the authority of the Scriptures, in fact impairs their supreme authority for faith and life and weakens the testimony of the church to the power of God unto salvation through Jesus Christ. We hold that the General Assembly of 1923, in asserting that "the Holy Spirit did so inspire, guide and move the writers of Holy Scripture as to keep them from error," spoke without warrant of the Scriptures or of the Confession of Faith. We hold rather to the words of the Confession of Faith, that the Scriptures "are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life" (Conf. I, ii).

#### AUTHORITY UNDER THE CONSTITUTION FOR THE DECLARATION OF DOCTRINE

II. While it is constitutional for any General Assembly "to bear testimony against error in doctrine" (Form of Govt. XII, v), yet such testimony is without binding authority, since the constitution of our church provides that its doctrine shall be declared only by con-

current action of the General Assembly and the presbyteries. Thus the church guards the statement of its doctrine against hasty or ill-considered action by either General Assemblies or presbyteries. From this provision of our constitution it is evident that neither in one General Assembly nor in many, without concurrent action of the presbyteries, is there authority to declare what the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America believes and teaches; and that the assumption that any General Assembly has authoritatively declared what the church believes and teaches is groundless. A declaration by a General Assembly that any doctrine is "an essential doctrine" attempts to amend the constitution of the church in an unconstitutional manner.

ACTION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY REGARDING THE PREACHING  
IN THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NEW YORK CITY

III. The General Assembly of 1923, in asserting that "doctrines contrary to the standards of the Presbyterian church" have been preached in the pulpit of the First Presbyterian Church of New York city, virtually pronounced a judgment against this church. The General Assembly did this with knowledge that the matter on which it so expressed itself was already under formal consideration in the Presbytery of New York, as is shown by the language of its action. The General Assembly acted in the case without giving hearing to the parties concerned. Thus the General Assembly did not conform to the procedure in such cases contemplated by our Book of Discipline, and, what is more serious, it in effect condemned a Christian minister without using the method of conference, patience and love enjoined on us by Jesus Christ. We object to the action of the General Assembly in this case as being out of keeping with the law and the spirit of our church.

THE DOCTRINAL DELIVERANCE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

IV. The General Assembly of 1923 expressed the opinion concerning five doctrinal statements that each

one "is an essential doctrine of the Word of God and our standards." On the constitutional grounds which we have before described, we are opposed to any attempt to elevate these five doctrinal statements, or any of them, to the position of tests for ordination or for good standing in our church.

Furthermore, this opinion of the General Assembly attempts to commit our church to certain theories concerning the inspiration of the Bible, and the incarnation, the atonement, the resurrection, and the continuing life and supernatural power of our Lord Jesus Christ. We all hold most earnestly to these great facts and doctrines; we all believe from our hearts that the writers of the Bible were inspired of God; that Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh; that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, and through Him we have our redemption; that, having died for our sins, He rose from the dead and is our ever-living Saviour; that in His earthly ministry He wrought many mighty works, and by His vicarious death and unfailing presence He is able to save to the uttermost. Some of us regard the particular theories contained in the deliverance of the General Assembly of 1923 as satisfactory explanations of these facts and doctrines. But we are united in believing that these are not the only theories allowed by the Scriptures and our standards as explanations of these facts and doctrines of our religion, and that all who hold to these facts and doctrines, whatever theories they may employ to explain them, are worthy of all confidence and fellowship.

#### EXTENT OF THE LIBERTY CLAIMED

V. We do not desire liberty to go beyond the teachings of evangelical Christianity. But we maintain that it is our constitutional right and our Christian duty within these limits to exercise liberty of thought and teaching, that we may more effectively preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.

## THE SPIRIT AND PURPOSE OF THIS AFFIRMATION

VI. Finally, we deplore the evidences of division in our beloved church, in the face of a world so desperately in need of a united testimony to the Gospel of Christ. We earnestly desire fellowship with all who like us are disciples of Jesus Christ. We hope that those to whom this affirmation comes will believe that it is not the declaration of a theological party, but rather a sincere appeal, based on the Scriptures and our standards for the preservation of the unity and freedom of our church, for which most earnestly we plead and pray.

INTELLECTUAL INTEGRITY, OR THE EQUAL RIGHTS OF FUNDAMENTALIST AND MODERNIST IN A COMPREHENSIVE CHURCH <sup>1</sup>

*"Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful."*— I Corinthians 4:2.

. . . I did not wish to call your attention to such a question as this, especially as we draw near to the Christmas season, but I am required by the Canons of the church to see that the Pastoral Letter is read to the congregation, and inasmuch as that Pastoral Letter does more than suggest that there are clergy preaching from our pulpits and ministering at our altars who are guilty of dishonesty, I feel it my duty to enter an emphatic protest. . . .

I. *Is this a "Pastoral Letter?"* [Dr. Parks questions the validity of the bishops' communication as a "Pastoral Letter."]

II. *The modernism of the bishops.* This letter is one of the effects produced by the tidal wave of modernism sweeping through all the church; and the attempt of

<sup>1</sup> By Rev. Leighton Parks, D.D., St. Bartholomew's Church, New York. Preached on the Sunday when the Bishops' Pastoral Letter was read. *Christian Work*. 115: 781-5. December 29, 1923. Also in *Churchman*. 129 No. 1: 10-17. January 5, 1924. Also printed as a pamphlet.

those who call themselves Fundamentalists to check the rising tide of knowledge, and as I believe, of spiritual life in the churches, has manifested itself in ways that must distress refined and intelligent people. In the Baptist church the Fundamentalists have manifested a spirit of vulgarity which is shocking. I do not think Dr. Grant has overstated the case in his comments upon the controversy in that church. In the Presbyterian church a spirit of obscurantism, identifying religion with exploded theories of the origin of the universe and of man, has made the late meeting of the General Assembly of that venerable church ridiculous.

Our bishops have not been guilty either of vulgarity or obscurantism. Indeed, they show evidence of the spirit of modernism. The statement that "the Christian faith may be distinguished from the forms in which it is expressed as something deeper and higher and more personal" could not have been found in any letter put forth by the House of Bishops forty or even twenty years ago. Also, that they should call in the "best scholars" to bear witness is deeply significant. But perhaps the most significant illustration of the spirit of modernism is found in the fact that they have abandoned the old orthodox position which insisted that the divinity of Christ was dependent upon the miracles, and recognize the miracles to be the natural effects produced by a divine personality.

They also show the spirit of modernism by recognizing that human words are inadequate to express divine realities. When, however, they deny the liberty which they enjoy in the interpretation of ten of the articles of the creed, to the interpretation of the two articles which refer to the incarnation and the resurrection, it will seem to some that they are inconsistent in logic and show signs of what may be called "arrested development" in their modernism. Certainly, those who have entered into the larger liberty which has come as the result of years of struggle have no desire to point



the finger of scorn at those who have not gone the whole way on the journey. They should recognize that this "arrested development" of the bishops probably means no more than that they are resting. They have been wearied by the journey, and however much it is to be regretted that their weariness should manifest itself in denunciation of those who have gone further along on the road to freedom, the "progressives" should rejoice as they note how great has been the advance of the whole army of the faithful.

As we look back over the history of the church in the past sixty years we see what advance has been made. When Dr. Temple publicly asserted that the Holy Scriptures showed a gradual development in knowledge, in morality, in the conception of the character of God, he was denounced and would have been put out of the English church had he not been protected by the laity. Yet that man lived to become the Archbishop of Canterbury, honored in all the churches; and that which was deemed his heresy is now a commonplace. When Bishop Colenso questioned the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and called attention to the fact that the numbers used in that ancient document were grossly exaggerated, he was deposed by the Synod of the South African church, but on appeal was justified by the Church of England. Some of us can remember when his name was coupled with that of Arius, almost with that of Judas. Yet his "heresy" is now admitted probably by all the bishops. Frederick Denison Maurice, one of the greatest prophets and philosophers and saints of the English church, was inhibited from preaching for a long period because he denied that the word "*aeonian*" was equivalent to "everlasting." When Dr. William R. Huntington and the late Dr. McKim accepted that teaching and refused to declare that they believed in the everlasting torture of the lost, the one was refused ordination for a long time and the other was denied the honor of the Episcopate. Yet how many of the bishops feel themselves called upon

to preach the old doctrine of "hell fire?" Bishop Clark, ultimately the Presiding Bishop of this church, told me that his ordination to the diaconate was held up for months because he could not get the bishop to agree that a man who was unable to accept the orthodox teaching concerning the nature of the resurrection of the body would be a faithful minister of the church. Yet which of the bishops believes in the resurrection of the body as it had been believed from early times? Phillips Brooks was denounced as a heretic because he would not fall into the heresy of Apollinarius! Every one of the "heresies" of the past the bishops have found means of incorporating into their interpretations of the orthodox faith of the church, and therefore we rejoice.

But now we come to the consideration of questions which are vital. The first is this:

III. *Are the bishops the sole defenders and definers of doctrine?* [Dr. Parks says all the clergy are equally responsible for this.]

IV. *The authority of the creed.* The next question to which I would call your attention is, What is the authority on which the Apostles' Creed rests? The bishops in their letter tell us that it is to be interpreted by the Nicene Creed. Inasmuch as they appeal to the Nicene Creed, it might be remembered that the Apostles' Creed in the form in which we now have it was not crystallized until centuries after the meeting of the Council of Nicaea in 325 A. D. The Apostles' Creed is the expression of a slow evolution which went on for centuries. Therefore, a creed set forth in 325 cannot be the interpreter of a creed which was not finished until centuries later.

1. But in my judgment they have been more unfortunate still when they come to deal with those two articles which they say can be interpreted only in one way. For when we turn to the Nicene Creed we find that the article which deals with the resurrection of our Lord says, "And the third day He rose again, according

to the Scriptures." I am well aware that many scholars interpret this to mean that He rose from the dead as had been prophesied in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, but I know no reason why it should not be interpreted as meaning that He rose from the dead as the New Testament declares. But leaving that question aside, in regard to which I do not pretend to speak with authority, let me remind you that the Nicene Creed itself refers us back to the Scriptures, declines to deal with the case, saying, "This court has no jurisdiction to try that case. It must be tried in the court of the Scriptures."

2. When the appeal is made to the Nicene Creed to show that the virgin birth is a "historical fact" the bishops have evidently forgotten what they all must know, namely, that the Nicene Creed made no allusion to the virgin birth; nor did the Creed of Eusebius, which the council had before it. The council considered this creed carefully before putting forth its statement of what it believed to be the faith of the church; and as a result this is what they said about the incarnation: "Who for us men and for our salvation came down and was made man and dwelt as man amongst men."

If in a police court an attorney were to say, "I propose to prove by the testimony of William Smith that such and such a thing took place," and when he called William Smith, found that William Smith knew nothing about it, would he be at liberty then to say to the jury, "When I said William Smith I meant Henry Jones?" And when he calls Henry Jones and finds that Henry Jones lived far away from the occurrence to which he is called upon to bear witness, what would the jury think, what would the judge say, of such a presentation of a case as that?

That is exactly what the bishops have done. I do not wish to press this point, because this is not a debating society, and I do not wish to score a verbal or technical victory. If I did, I think I could rest my case here. But something far deeper than any verbal or technical

victory is concerned with this matter, my brethren. And, therefore, I will not press that point. Of course, the bishops would answer that when they said the "Nicene" Creed, they did not mean the creed put forth by the Council of Nicaea, but that they were using the term in the sense in which it is popularly understood; that is, that they meant the creed which we have just repeated in this morning's service. They are aware that that creed was not put forth by the Council of Nicaea; that it was recited at the Council of Constantinople more than fifty years later, and that in the meantime, as the "best scholars" tell us, some copyist, who knowing that it was the opinion of the whole church at that time that our Saviour was born of a virgin, put that in on his own authority. The Council of Constantinople never considered the question. They were engaged on an entirely different problem, namely, the question of the priority of the Bishop of Rome and the Bishop of Constantinople, and they simply took the creed which was handed them by the copyist and recited it as satisfactory to them without any discussion. It was not until the Council of Chalcedon, more than one hundred and twenty-five years after the Council of Nicaea, that the creed which we have just repeated was set forth with the authority of a council.

Is there any lawyer here who, if he wished to illustrate the teaching of the framers of the Constitution of the United States, would say that the fifteenth, sixteenth and eighteenth amendments to the Constitution, passed over a hundred years after the formal establishment of it, represented the minds of the fathers of the country? We have no more right to quote the Creed of Chalcedon as representing the minds of the fathers of Nicaea than we have to quote the eighteenth amendment as representing the minds of Hamilton and Madison and Jefferson. Nicaea, like the imaginary "William Smith," bears no testimony, and Chalcedon, like "Henry Jones," was far from the scene! But even though what is popu-



larly called the "Nicene" Creed was set forth with the authority of a General Council, that does not make it the final court of appeal nor an infallible interpreter, because the standards of the English church from which our church derives; the same standards that our church deliberately set up, say distinctly that "General Councils . . . (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God), may err and sometimes have erred." In other words, the English church not only absolutely refused to allow the bishops to be the sole definers of doctrine, but also to have the authority of the creed referred back to any General Council.

Then to what did they refer it? They referred it to the Holy Scriptures. . . . We turn away from the Catholic tradition. We turn away from the General Councils, and we take these two doctrines back to the Scriptures. What do we find?

1. We find, first of all, in regard to the resurrection of our Lord that the record is exceedingly confusing. Sometimes it would seem as if we were in the presence of a natural body which had been reanimated, and at other times it seems as if we saw a ghost. Now, then, to assert that no man is justified in reciting the article concerning the resurrection of our Lord unless he is prepared to say that it is a "bodily" resurrection is believed by many earnest ministers in this church to be a "strange" doctrine. They turn to St. Paul's account of the vision of our Lord which converted him and they see no sign of any physical body. They study St. Paul's epistles and learn from them that in his judgment all of us shall rise as Christ rose. As long as the Christian church believed that the same body which was laid in the grave arose at the Last Day, it was inevitable that the church should believe that Christ arose in the same way. But now that no intelligent man believes that the dead bodies rise from the grave, why should we insist that the essential thing in the resurrection of our Lord is "bodily?" Does



not this expression in the Pastoral teach the fundamental philosophic heresy which declares the physical to be more real than the spiritual? I believe that to be an "erroneous" doctrine. May the Fundamentalist unchurch the Modernist who believes in the spiritual resurrection of our Lord? No more than the Modernist may unchurch the Fundamentalist who believes in the "bodily" resurrection of our Lord. Both can find justification for their interpretation in the Holy Scriptures.

This point is of great importance. In ten of the articles of the creed the Fundamentalists, or many of them, have spiritualized the doctrines. What right have they so to do? There is not one of the bishops who believes the article concerning our Lord's ascension as it has been believed from early days. In a Ptolemaic universe it was inevitable that the ascension should be conceived as a physical fact. There seemed no incongruity in supposing that the physical body of our Lord was lifted from the Mount of Olives to the throne of God at some point in space above the visible firmament. But every bishop today has abandoned that notion. They are living in another universe. They know that if our Lord's body had begun to ascend into space forty days after His resurrection it would not today have reached the farthest star revealed by the telescope. Yet Stephen saw Him standing at the right hand of God soon after His ascension. What justification have the bishops for changing the interpretation which has come down to them through the Catholic tradition? If they base it upon the knowledge that has come through astronomy, they are rationalists. The knowledge may lead them to doubt the traditional interpretation, but it does not justify them in remaining ministers of a church which has inherited the tradition, *unless* they are able to show by the Holy Scriptures that another interpretation is justified. The position of the Modernist is exactly the same, only he is applying the same method to the two articles to which the bishops declare that it may not be applied. It will not do to un-

church the Modernist on the ground that he is a rationalist and the Fundamentalist is not, if the Modernist appeals to the Scriptures and is convinced that they justify him in a more spiritual interpretation of the articles concerning the incarnation and the resurrection than the Catholic tradition approves.

2. And so we come to a far more living question, because it touches emotion and because it is of a nature that we do not care to discuss before a general congregation, and that is whether or not our Lord was born of a virgin or of a married woman. Of course, those who say that he was born of a virgin are justified by the Scriptures, though as far as I know there are only three passages which do justify that belief, but they are enough. Now, the vital question is, Can the Modernist find justification in the Scriptures themselves for his interpretation of the article in the creed which treats of the incarnation? I believe he can. In the first place, he reads the very passages on which the Fundamentalist bases his interpretation and he questions if they can bear the weight. There is a passage in the prophecy of Isaiah, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." But the "best scholars" tell us that the Hebrew word *almah* translated *parthenos* in the Greek version and "virgin" in the English really means a young married woman. They ask why, if Isaiah meant "virgin" he did not use the Hebrew word *bethulah* instead of *almah*. Moreover, they learn from the prophecy of Isaiah that the child who was to be born and called Immanuel was born in the very year in which the prophet spoke; that possibly the "young woman" was the wife of the prophet. The Modernist recognizes that it was natural that the early Christians who turned back to the only Bible they had, the Old Testament, should find in such a prophecy a beautiful suggestion of the birth of our Saviour. But they do not feel that it is conclusive. And when we come to the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke we see that it is stated that our

Saviour was born of a virgin, and all who feel that that is a part of the Christian faith are justified by the Scriptures in so asserting their belief.

But if that were all, then there are many in the church, both laity and clergy, who would be bound as honest men to withdraw. But it is not all. Another man turns to the Scriptures and he is told by the "best scholars," not the radical minds but conservative scholars, that those two chapters, one in St. Matthew and one in St. Luke, belong to the introductions of those Gospels which were added after the original authors, whom we call Matthew and Luke, had finished their work; in other words, that that record represents a theory in regard to our Saviour's birth which came into the church after those Gospels were written.

But this is not the whole of the story. Men turn to the Epistles of St. Paul, written long before any of the Gospels, and they find St. Paul saying, "Jesus Christ . . . was made of the seed of David according to the flesh." Then they turn to the genealogical table in the Gospel of Matthew and find that the descendant of David is Joseph and that there is no mention of Mary as descended from David. If I wished to bring a railing accusation, I should say that the attempts which have been made to prove that this really refers to Mary are unworthy of scholarly men. But I do not say this. I do not even say that it is disingenuous. I only say that it is ingenious and that it would never have been attempted had it not been necessary to make the facts accord with a theory, instead of deducing a theory from the facts. And when we turn to the Gospel of Luke we read that "*Jesus was supposed to be* the son of Joseph, . . . who was the son of Adam, the son of God." They turn to the Epistle to the Galatians and find Paul saying, "Jesus Christ was made of a woman." Does that mean born of a virgin? Most scholars agree that it was a familiar Hebrew saying which simply meant to express the birth of every man. Job says, "Man that is born of woman is

of few days, and full of trouble." Does that mean that the "changes and chances of this mortal life" come only upon those who are virgin born? Our Lord Himself says, speaking of John the Baptist, "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." Does that mean that John was born of a virgin? We turn to the Gospel of Mark, which Catholic tradition says was dictated by the Apostle Peter, and there is not one word about the virgin birth in it. We turn to the fourth Gospel, which paints the portrait of the glorified Christ, and we find the author saying that when our patron saint, Bartholomew, was urged by Philip to come to Jesus, he tells him that he is to meet the son of Joseph, though the same author has just declared that John the Baptist said that Jesus was the Son of God. In other words, many Modernists believe that they are justified by the Scriptures in denying that the virgin birth is a "historical fact."

How, then, it is asked, can they repeat the words of the creed? They turn once more to John and they hear these words: "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." But that does not refer to the Word of which John has just been speaking; it refers to every soul that has received Him. Our natural birth is not the expression of our real life. It is the birth from above which is "not of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God." Now, then, there are men and women and ministers of the church who say the historic words of the creed, and while they cannot affirm that the virgin birth is a "historical fact," do believe that they are justified by the Scripture in using the old language to express their belief that in a way that is true of none of us, He was born "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." And because they believe Him to be the incarnate Word of God; God from God, Light from Light, Life from Life, Very God from Very God; because they look to Him for



health and salvation; because they believe that "there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved;" and because they believe that that faith in their Saviour may be expressed in the historic words which to them mean His pure innocence, His uniqueness, and His essential divinity, though to the men of old the words expressed a historic fact, are they to be called dishonest men? They have their warrant in the Scriptures.

V. *Intellectual integrity.* Now it may be asked, "Who has been called a dishonest man?" I think that is the most serious blot on this document. The very fact that nobody is named cannot fail to sow the seed of suspicion in the minds of many congregations that the bishops may refer to their minister. There is a widespread belief, whether it be justified or not, that this letter of the bishops is directed against the Bishop of Massachusetts; that his book called "Fifty Years," which I again advise every one of you to read, is one of those "recent utterances" which have disturbed the minds of certain "eminent laymen." Very well. If in a meeting of the Board of Aldermen the Mayor were to come in and say, "There are grafters at this table," instantly he would be called on to name them. In no company of honorable men may anonymous accusations be thrown broadcast without insistence that the name of the man referred to shall be heard. Why do not the bishops name Bishop Lawrence? Because if they did, it would be necessary to bring him to trial. And why is he not brought to trial? Because it would shake this church to its foundations. There is not a poor clergyman in this church who does not daily thank God for what that man has done to relieve their poverty. There is not a layman who has ever been brought into contact with him who not only has been profoundly impressed by the simplicity of his character, by the sanity of his judgment, by his grasp of business principles, but who also has not been convinced that "his righteousness is as clear as the light



and his just dealing as the noon day." They cannot bring him to trial.

I will ask why they do not bring me to trial. I am not a distinguished person. I do not for one moment put myself on a level with the Bishop of Massachusetts, but for many years I have been teaching two things which the Pastoral declares to be unsound and suggests that the minister who so teaches is a dishonest man. I have never said privately anything I have not said publicly; I have said nothing in this church that I have not published in a book which any one who cares to may read; and in all, I have said that while belief in the incarnation is essential, and while unquestionably at the time the Apostles' Creed was set forth, the only way of expressing the belief of the church in the incarnation was by the assertion that Jesus was born of a virgin, I have denied that belief in the incarnation necessitated the acceptance of the virgin birth as a "historical fact." I have justified my younger brethren in continuing in the ministry though they could not accept the virgin birth as a "historical fact" or the "bodily" resurrection of our Lord. I have urged men and women to come to the communion who could not so accept the creed. And I would call particular attention to the fact that if it is unlawful or dishonest for a minister of our church to teach as I have taught, it is also unlawful and dishonest for those who have accepted my teaching to come to the communion. There cannot be one law for the clergy and another for the laity. So that this letter, which at first might have seemed to be the condemnation of a few ministers, will be found to be the condemnation of a very large number of the thoughtful laity as well.

I think, if I may be allowed to say so without offense, that the bishops are confused. I know of no man who pretends that the expression in the Apostles' Creed "born of the Virgin Mary," was used in any except a most literal sense by the early church, any more than he denies that the words "the resurrection of the body,"

had anything but a physical significance to the men of old; and while it would be dishonest, or at least show ignorance for any man so to assert, he cannot be called dishonest if, admitting that the fact of the incarnation could only have been expressed in the Apostles' Creed in the words with which we are familiar, continues to use them with a spiritual significance which no physical fact can adequately reveal. And if it be thought that this is dishonest, why am I not brought to trial?

I can imagine that if that were suggested to my bishop—and I have no doubt it has been suggested to him—he might say in a most kindly spirit, "He is the last man in this Diocese whom I should desire to bring to trial; first, because he used every legitimate effort to prevent my election to the Episcopate. He is reported to have said that 'he would vote for any respectable clergyman rather than for me.' If then I bring him to trial, shall I not lay myself open to the suspicion that I am actuated by unworthy motives?" No one who knows him would think that of him, I least of all. He might go on to say more than that: "Since my election he has endeavored to show himself a loyal friend, and I look on him as my friend and I should be very loath to bring such trouble upon him." But if it were urged that it was his duty, as I believe it is his duty if he believes me to be dishonest or heretical, he might say, "Well, possibly, and if he were a younger man, it might be desirable, but he is an old man. The time left for him to do harm to the church is very short. I would not bring down his gray hairs to the grave in disgrace. Wait and after a little while some one will come and take his place, and all will be forgotten that he has said." I venture to suggest that if this were the thought of the bishop he would be mistaken in regard to two facts. I am an old man and the time of my departure is at hand, but I should not consider it a disgrace to be deposed from the ministry of this church for anything I have said either privately or publicly; I should consider it an honor to

be led off from the stage where I have tried to serve my Lord for half a century, escorted by a committee of dignified clergy and the bishop himself! And another mistake would be to forget that while the sere and yellow leaf falls to the ground, it is not alone because the sap no longer flows through it nor because the inevitable action of the law of gravitation drags it from the twig. It is because each leaf is pushed off by the bud that has been forming to take its place. So when they have gotten rid of me, they will find that there is another just as bad—perhaps five, perhaps twenty. Indeed, when I note how the spirit of modernism has penetrated the House of Bishops as shown in this letter, I believe that that spirit will animate the direction of the church in the years to come.

If they do not bring Bishop Lawrence; if they do not bring me; if they do not bring Dr. Worcester of Emmanuel Church, Boston, whose name is illustrious in all the churches of this country and Europe as well, who has signed a public protest against this Pastoral; if they do not bring these men to trial, whom will they bring to trial? I would not say one word to misrepresent the bishops or to stir up feeling against them. I believe them good and earnest, even if mistaken men; but I will put a hypothetical case to you. Suppose any judge in this city were to feel that men of the standing of Mr. Root or Mr. Wickersham or Judge Parker or Judge Seabury had been guilty of contempt of court by some public utterance and yet did nothing about it, but dragged some poor friendless, almost unknown attorney before the awful judgment seat and disbarred him, what would the righteous public opinion of this country say? Now, then, there is a poor, helpless but not altogether friendless man in another diocese whom it is proposed to bring to trial for saying the same things that Lawrence and Worcester and I and many others have said for years. The bishop of that diocese said in regard to the man whom he proposes to try (I would not believe it when

I first heard it; I thought it was either a slander or a gross exaggeration, but I have in my possession the sworn affidavit of an attorney in that diocese, witnessed to by a notary public that the bishop said in his presence) that unless a certain clergyman in the diocese retracted the statement that the virgin birth was not a "historical fact" he would be brought to trial, in which case he would stand "*about as much chance of acquittal as a snowball in hell.*" It only shows to what theological excitement will lead a good man. Is it possible that a fair trial can be obtained in a court constituted by a bishop who would say such a thing as that?

Now, it may be that in this controversy and in every particular of it, the Fundamentalist may be right and the Modernist wrong, but in that case, the Modernist must be convinced by reason, by sound scholarship, and the Holy Scriptures, and not by any dogmatic fulmination issuing from Dallas, Texas. Attention has already been called to the fact that the bishops call in the "best scholars" to bear witness to their interpretation of the creed, but they do not tell us who those "best scholars" are nor what has been the result of their study. Possibly they do not know.

VI. *Effects.* Now let us ask what is to be the result of this letter.

1. I do not believe this man to whom I have alluded will be brought to trial. I doubt if anyone will be brought to trial. I think that already the protest that has come out from the church, not only from the laity, but from the clergy and from a number of bishops, will make it impossible to carry the threats in this Pastoral into effect.

2. But the dreadful thing is that anybody should be threatened. I wonder that the Fathers of the Church who come into contact with the poor clergy should not have asked themselves whether or not a threat was not likely to be a temptation to intellectual dishonesty. They know that many of the clergy are dependent upon the



goodwill of their bishop, not only for preferment but even for the support of their families. If, then, in the fulfilment of their ordination vow they seek by the help of the best scholars to learn the truth about the Bible, haunted by the fear that the result may not be in accordance with the opinion of the bishops, how can they fail to be tempted to that insincerity which manifests itself in *suppressio veri*.

3. What can be the effect of this suspicion upon the work of the church? . . .

There is such need, with the nations of the world in perplexity; with anarchy undermining our social life following the Volstead Act; with men and women who ought to be the future teachers of the church driven from the altar and from the ministry because they cannot accept the dogmatic statements in the way in which the Fundamentalists would interpret them. I would that the bishops had found some word of comfort to say to their brethren of the clergy who would gladly serve God in their day and generation, and not suggest that we were dishonest men.

I venture to suggest that in years to come some historian of the church will turn over the yellowed leaves of this forgotten Pastoral and ask himself, "What was it all about?" It cannot be a comforting thought to the sixty-five bishops to reflect that his conclusion may be that this Pastoral was conceived in panic and brought forth in haste.

## CONSCIENCE AND THE BISHOPS: A HISTORIC STEP<sup>1</sup>

The House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church in an evening and a morning of last November created a new situation in that communion, not bringing order out of chaos, but something very like chaos out of what had

<sup>1</sup> By Dickinson S. Miller, then professor in the General Theological Seminary, New York. New Republic, 38: 35-9. March 5, 1924.



been order. It was not fortunate that by an act so rapid and so slightly considered so profound an upheaval should have been occasioned; but since it was so, it would not be expedient to rest the matter until the question at issue has for practical purposes been settled. The question is of the right of individual clergymen to interpret certain articles of the creed in a symbolic, not a literal sense. And it would be neither expedient nor honorable to rest the matter until it has been made clear to the public that the bishops' implied charge of dishonesty against some of their own number and many others is without basis. By that accusation (which had they paused to look into the state of opinion and into recent history and ecclesiastical rulings could hardly have been made) against some of the most respected men in the church, they secured a prompt and formidable revolt. As the matter stands at present, their act has in the short interval had results out of which has emerged a more incontestable basis for the liberties they condemned than has ever existed before. It is of capital importance that this result shall not be reversed.

The church is a deep-seated organ of society, powerful for good. It is the institute of the inner life, which is by nature weaker than the outer life and yet has the ultimate control over it. So long as man has an inner life, requiring to be developed, steadied and guided, there will be need of the church. It demands the best mind and soul of the community to lead it. To-day there are crying tasks for moral influence and leadership (in no little part unnoted) which belong to its function and which it should perform. It is not forever limited to its present scope. Society should not encourage it to bar out the more enlightened and alert young spirits. Yet society is prone to forget its own stake in the matter, look on indifferently and merely say: "Every man has a right to his opinion, but if he doesn't believe what the church says he should go out of it." This is sound sense and truth, but it does not carry the

conclusion fancied. The question is, What does the church really say? That is, what does it mean, or permit us to mean, by the words it uses? While historic and venerable words are retained, full of true symbolic force and fitness and holding the church in spirit together through the ages, is it forbidden that the mind and meaning behind them should grow in depth and enlightenment? That is what is being decided now and it is in the interest of society that it should be decided for the largest benefit.

It is a point that has to be decided. In any oath, vow or test the question may be raised, What do these words mean? And there is only one authority that can answer, the authority that imposes the oath, vow or test. If the church permits certain words of the creed to be accepted in a figurative or symbolic sense it is not dishonest to say them in that sense. If it refuses to permit this it will be dishonest. For that will not be within *the meaning of the words* as officially employed.

Religion involves worship, and this is an action in which many of the intellectual class have no desire to engage. "Only by bowing down before the higher," said Carlyle, "does man feel himself exalted." Those who do desire to engage in it know that the spirit of worship cannot express itself and give the measure of its depth without potent symbolism. When the worship is just, such symbolism is expressive of truth. Christianity is not the mere devotion to a principle but to a Person as embodying that principle. Christ, by His principle of love and benefit, which He declared to be the one basis of the whole moral law, and by the identification of His whole personality, acts, teaching, death and spirit with the principle, becomes an object of the Christian's personal worship as an embodiment of the divine. There is no truer or higher object of worship. The historic dogmas that have gathered about Him have this in common, that their purpose is to exalt and magnify Jesus Christ. To say in the creed that He was "conceived

by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary," that He was the Son of God and also of man, is, for many of us, to use a historic and poetic symbol to express the truth that while He had all the nature of the children of men He was divine in nature in that He was peculiarly one with the spirit of God.

Long ago at a university I had unexpectedly to take an oath. The dean placed a paper with the form of words before me. In doubt whether I could sincerely use certain expressions I asked him what they meant. He gave them a broad and non-literal interpretation; to this I could subscribe and I took the oath. It was he who asked me to take it, he stood by to represent the imposing power, and it would have been idle and absurd to insist upon taking the language in a narrower sense when he authorized a wider one. The case is typical. When the meaning of the creed is in question the church alone can decide, the present church, for it is the present church that imposes it as a test and could cease to impose it. If instead I had at first said to the dean, "There is one sense in which I can say these words and I shall take the oath in that sense," and he had heard without demur, the case would have been precisely the same. The question of veracity depends wholly on the question, What are the permitted meanings? No one wishes to forbid the literal interpretation; the wish is that the non-literal shall be permitted also. Anyone who looks at history and the growth of a social organism will see that there is only one way in which wider meanings can begin to be permitted, namely by precedent; by the initiative of individuals, who find a larger sense possible for the words and let it be known that they take them in that sense. If the corporate church forbids this, or deems it ground for ejection from the ministry, the matter is settled—for the time at least. If the corporate church, knowing, does not condemn, it leaves the precedent standing; it is permitting the new interpretation. And when this fact is sufficiently clear others are entitled to regard

the meaning as permitted. Individuals by their initiative are not merely deciding for themselves, they are playing a legitimate part toward forming the attitude of the church. Such growth and enlargement cannot be effected in the first instance by formal action of the whole church, for new interpretations must exist within the body before it is called upon to judge of them. It is in this respect properly a slow-moving body; it does not make up its mind quickly, having a wide range of mind to make up. Much consideration, warning, experience, balancing of opposite forces, intellectual sympathy, charity, caution may go to the making of the church's ultimate will with regard to such a precedent.

The frequent indifference of society toward the individual who is fighting its battles within the ancient organization is seen not least in those who only too cordially agree with him in the negative or questioning part of his opinions; and this for the reason that they have little interest in the constructive and cooperative part. Their only aid is the casual advice to come and join them outside. It is, therefore, worth while to quote from John Stuart Mill, whom the late Lord Morley called "the wisest and most virtuous man whom I have ever known or am likely to know," some words uttered in the Inaugural address which he delivered as Rector to the students of St. Andrew's University:

Those of you who are destined for the clerical profession are, no doubt, so far held to a certain number of doctrines, that, if they ceased to believe them, they would not be justified in remaining in a position in which they would be required to teach insincerely. But use your influence to make those doctrines as few as possible. It is not right that men should be bribed to hold out against conviction—to shut their ears against objections, or, if the objections penetrate, to continue professing full and unflinching belief when their confidence is already shaken. Neither is it right that, if men honestly profess to have changed some of their religious opinions, their honesty should as a matter of course exclude them from taking a part, for which they may be admirably qualified, in the spiritual instruction of the nation. The tendency of the age, on both sides of the ancient Border, is towards the relaxation of formularies, and a less rigid construction of articles. This very circumstance, by



making the limits of orthodoxy less definite, and obliging everyone to draw the line for himself, is an embarrassment to consciences. But I hold entirely with those clergymen who elect to remain in the national church, so long as they are able to accept its articles and confessions in any sense or with any interpretation consistent with common honesty, whether it be the generally received interpretation or not. If all were to desert the church who put a large and liberal construction on its terms of communion, or who would wish to see those terms widened, the national provision for religious teaching and worship would be left utterly to those who take the narrowest, the most literal, and purely textual view of the formularies; who, though by no means necessarily bigots, are under the great disadvantage of having bigots for their allies, and who, however great their merits may be—and they are often very great—yet, if the church is improvable, are not the most likely persons to improve it. Therefore, if it were not an impertinence to me to render advice in such a matter, I should say, let all who conscientiously can, remain in the church. A church is far more easily improved from within than from without. Almost all the illustrious reformers of religion began by being clergymen; but they did not think that their profession as clergymen was inconsistent with being reformers. They mostly indeed ended their days outside the churches in which they were born; but it was because the churches, in an evil hour for themselves, cast them out. They did not think it any business of theirs to withdraw. They thought they had a better right to remain in the fold, than those had who expelled them.

Apparently such members of the House of Bishops as voted on this matter in November did not hold that in these matters the church must act with cautious deliberation, on pain of discovering that it had not been the church that was acting but only an insufficiently informed portion of it. Summarily to condemn the precedents that had established freer interpretation was what they undertook. The house is for the most part a cautious, conciliatory, kindly body, for the individual bishops usually possess these qualities. But on this occasion it adopted and issued as a Pastoral Letter the report of a small committee which by implication finds well-known bishops, hundreds of the clergy, and thousands of the laity guilty of a position regarding the creeds inconsistent with "honesty in the use of language." In the same connection are used the words "dishonesty and unreality." The example given is the interpreting of the words "con-



ceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary" in any other than the literal sense. "For holding and teaching" such an interpretation "a clergyman is liable to be presented for trial." The subject had not been announced in the call for the meeting as coming up for action or discussion and many bishops were absent. It is credibly reported that some who were present were taken unawares and did not vote. The letter was in response to a petition addressed to the house by Senator Pepper of Pennsylvania and other laymen asking some definite pronouncement on the too free interpretations of doctrine in certain quarters. The report was adopted unanimously.

A Pastoral Letter is merely a species of sermon addressed to the whole church; it has no binding authority. Only the decision of General Convention or of a court of final appeal created by General Convention could have that. None the less the action created instantly a new moral situation. So long as any fair-minded inquirer who asked himself, To what are the Episcopal clergy really committed? would find the true state of things and therein find the liberty that precedents had secured, the situation was tolerable. But when he would find these precedents declared null and void by a body so widely representative and so near the seat of legislative and judicial power this situation was gravely compromised. The wider interpretations had not yet by authority been forbidden but they had suffered a weighty challenge; they had become doubtful. The precedents must be reestablished; that is, they must be renewed in no uncertain manner and must remain uncondemned by any final authority. Any other course would have permitted the church to lock itself in a dark room and throw the key out of the window. Accordingly, numerous clergymen since the Pastoral Letter have been engaged in renewing the precedents. The Modern Churchman's Union and the faculty of the Episcopal Theological School of Cambridge, affiliated with Harvard, have

issued protests. The rectors of the most prominent parishes, with few exceptions, in the largest city of the country have either by word or by act expressed their disapproval. Not widespread controversy only but still more widespread acute disturbance of private minds and feelings among devoted members of the church on both sides has ensued. The bishops had unwittingly thrown a torch into a somewhat inflammable building.

The question was now whether they would carry their opinion into action and bring non-literalists to trial. Almost immediately afterward the Rev. Lee W. Heaton in the diocese of Dallas, Texas, where the bishops' meeting had been held, was presented for trial. The Bishop Coadjutor of Texas announced however that, while the presentment was warranted, "as similar interpretations of the doctrine in question are held, taught and preached" by bishops, he was unwilling to consent to the trial, and waited until higher authority should point out the course of wisdom and justice. That is, Bishop Moore desisted on precisely what appeared above to be the natural ground, that the opinion was already too well entrenched in the church. The effect of the course he has taken is that the freer interpretation in his diocese is permitted; by an act whose deliberate and responsible character is notably enhanced by its coming directly after the bishops' pronouncement and under the aroused attention of the whole church. Unless Dr. Lawrence or other bishops or priests are now not only proceeded against but condemned for their stand on the same doctrine, which is hardly likely, Bishop Moore's action, taken with what preceded it, remains a definitive and historic step.

To leave the subject here would be to leave a vital half of it unstated. What appears to be the public's impression of the whole matter is a caricature. This is not a simple struggle between Modernists and conservatives, in which one party should conquer. To be sure the charges of dishonesty must be repelled and the poison-

ous suspicion of it removed by the light of day. For the rest, what is needed is not a triumph but a synthesis. The bishops in their instinct are right, though in their method wrong. They are springing to the defence of something vital. That something is the personal worship of Jesus Christ as an eternal presence, a being having not only goodness but power, a potent saviour. They regard this as essential to the faith and as imperilled by "modernism," and they are right.

Incidentally, be it said that it is by no means only "broad-churchmen" who take certain clauses of the creed in a non-literal sense. Many catholics or "high-churchmen," including some identified with the extreme and strictest school, do so too; while fully retaining their descent<sup>1</sup> from "liberal protestantism."

Modernism! What an ominous party-name! An idea is not sound because it is modern. Not a few modern ideas and tendencies are bad and noxious. We should not be in quest of whatsoever things are modern but of what is true. If we are captivated by the fashions of thought of our own time one thing is tolerably certain, that we shall appear antiquated to succeeding ages. Modernism is provincialism in the realm of time. It is reasonable-ism, true-ism that should be our only concern. To say "The spirit of the age has changed; we moderns can't believe that sort of thing any more" is to trust to one of the most treacherous of guides, a contagious and prevailing mood or habit of mind. Education should enable a man to reach out beyond the currents and eddies of opinion in which he lives and lay hold of something firm and unshaken, of principles of sound evidence, of those tests of truths that have nothing to do with fashion. An age gains no more than an individual from conceit of its ideas, and would do well to escape so far as it can from itself, its current impulses and easy assumptions, into a larger world, to detect its own blindnesses and learn how to cure them. Yet an age is no more disposed to do this than an individual.

<sup>1</sup> dissent?

The progress of the church's mind does not consist in discarding old Christianity or parts of it and substituting new ideas. Its business is not to adopt modern thoughts as patches on an old and ragged garment. Christianity has a logical development from within itself. The more conservative it is the more progressive it must be, if its conservatism is genuine, for it is conservative of a progressive thing. It is perpetually preaching "newness of life." A gospel of love is a gospel of ever-better service and, therefore, of ever-better intelligence. You cannot serve effectually without understanding your task, your beneficiary and his situation in the real world. "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment." There is no strife between realism and idealism, for you must know the world as it is to make it what it should be. Precisely in the interests of the service for which it exists the church must seek light from every quarter, "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions." Its maxim must be: "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." I repeat, this comes out of its gospel and is not merely thrust upon it by modern enlightenment. In other words, the principle develops out of its gospel that it should take the fullest advantage of modern enlightenment.

The church is conservative because what it has to preserve is precious. It has to preserve religion. Its business is not to formulate a correct philosophical analysis but to reveal such aspects of reality as speak to the will and the mood, create impulse, transform life and satisfy or overwhelm contemplation. Christian religion is not merely ethics, else it could not be a powerful reinforcement to ethics. It is the worship of a person embodying a principle. It understands the secret of the heart and loves the principle in the person. We see the men and women of today; we cannot see Christ with our literal eyes; but the mind's eye seeks to perceive Him across the centuries as a living being; or rather



detaches Him from His place in history and rests upon Him as a timeless presence, the ever-accessible incarnation of the highest. There is indeed peril that much of this will be cleared ruthlessly away by levelling and modernizing habits of thought which criticize religion as if it had the function of science and neglect the needs of the inner life as if it were an impertinent and disturbing beggar, or by a complaisant religious modernism which yields too far to these habits. It is truth that for the soul the intervention of centuries is irrelevant and that Christ is a present and intimate saviour. For it was true that in intent His compassion and will to understand knew no limit and that He reserved a delicate sympathy for every soul that might come to Him. That He asks men to repent, brings them forgiveness, gives them strength to amend, and is with them as consoler and support, has a truth far profounder than the barriers of historic time that divide Him from us. It is true that simple souls (and in this all souls are simple) may cast their cares on Him and feel relief. In this light, as the instantaneous deliverer of the spirit, an air of the transcendent and miraculous justly clings about Him—an air of one “supernatural, superrational, super-everything.” To tamper with it seems to threaten His power and competence as a deliverer. The philosophy does not exist, nor the delicate justice to the facts, which would fully interpret and vindicate all this. In the interests of the soul during a difficult period of transition it may for some be far truer to surround the doctrine of the virgin birth with a wide and inviolate circle of reverence and caution, than to enter, as here, upon analysis. It is unpardonably wrong to teach something untrue because it will do good, but it may be right to refrain from teaching something true to certain persons because it will do harm; that is, because it would be asking too much to expect them to discern it without further intellectual experience, in its true perspective. No false word should be said, but—any word, in this sphere,



paralyzing to the spiritual life is a false word. Few critics appear to grasp the whole function of symbolism. It is common to say "Oh that is symbolism, is it? Very well. But putting symbolism aside and speaking seriously," etc. It is not perceived that a symbol may be an instrument of knowledge, a means to practical truth, that its office is to exert forthwith the power upon life that philosophic truth *ought* to exert when at length secured and seen in all its true proportions.

Thus the bishops were hastening to the defence of a life, a habit of spiritual devotion, a source of power. Minds accustomed to an accepted body of ideas and not to its analysis must feel the whole threatened if rude hands are laid on any part. None the less the deep truth in Christian dogma must in its own interest be freed as soon as possible from literal misstatement of historical or cosmic fact and relieved from any conflict with the discoveries of intelligence. The gospel of intelligence must fully be joined to the gospel of the spirit. The task of complete synthesis is perhaps the most arduous that the human mind has ever attempted and it is but too easy for the advance-agents of enlightenment to "substitute a rude simplicity for the complexity of truth." Still, those who say, "This is a difficult time of intellectual transition" must not proceed, by a policy of persistent silence, to make that time as long as possible. Reserve within the church, which every mind of judgment and weight knows to be sometimes indispensable, should have its limits and never be taken up as a permanent attitude; it should keep watch for the opportunities to carry the transition forward.

Still more firmly must it be said that to disregard Christian morals in the attempt to preserve Christian doctrine is of unhappy omen. The bishops address an emphatic admonition to conscience, declaring that a non-literal interpretation of the clause concerning Christ's birth is "plainly an abuse of language," implying that it is "to trifle with words and cannot but expose us to the suspicion and danger of dishonesty and unreality."

Indeed they go further and appear to imply or suggest that it is flatly inconsistent with "honesty in the use of language." To conscience they appeal, let conscience speak. To bring such charges by plain implication against so many men of long service and honorable standing without taking up, or hinting at the existence of, the case for the defence, as stated above and in innumerable other forms before, without considering the decisions of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in the mother-church of England, without evincing any sense that such men must have something to say for themselves and that such a movement in history can hardly have been oblivious of moral considerations; this was to risk using their authority, as unhappily they have actually used it, to promulgate or suggest an injurious slander.

The bishops continue: "Objections to the doctrine of the virgin birth [meaning the literal doctrine] . . . have been abundantly dealt with by the best scholarship of the day." They have of course been "dealt with" by scholarship of various grades, but the bishops evidently mean, not merely dealt with, but effectually met. What a curious conception of the legitimate grounds of belief is betrayed by assuring us that all is well because "objections" "have been abundantly dealt with!" To prove an alleged historical fact what we need is sufficient evidence that it occurred: to controvert the objections that happen to have been made by this or that person or even to offer an explanation of the difficulties presented by the records, is not the primary requirement. That we are entitled to assume an alleged occurrence to have taken place until objections are made to it, which then have to be "dealt with," does indeed appear to be the impression of many minds but it receives no encouragement from logic. If the testimony of the church is invoked as the initial authority then that authority must first of all be validated from the ground up as adequate in respect of this particular event.

It would have been a more congenial task to write this article without a word to intimate that one position

on the historical question was better intrenched than the other. But the bishops in an official document have undertaken to pronounce that the position they oppose is based on inferior scholarship. Once more, we have no right by our considerate reserves to prolong the period of precarious transition which they are intended to safeguard. The Pastoral Letter has precipitated a necessity for plain speaking under which we can no longer courteously cloak the fact that no thoroughly educated man believes in the literal virgin birth;—though many men do so whose spiritual life, ability and efficiency command our admiration. By education I do not mean learning, but the possession of a competent common-sense training in judging of ordinary matters of evidence. It by no means follows that all who do not believe are thoroughly educated. Loyalty to the clergy is a fine thing, so long as it is consistent with loyalty to the church and to humanity. It is sometimes said that the literal version of the doctrine is rendered so highly probable by certain presuppositions that it does not require such ample evidence as is supposed. But the presuppositions themselves rest upon the slenderest basis of evidence. It is not until we recognize that here too are stern matters of moral principle, that the faithful pursuit of truth by the path of sound method and intellectual honor—a well-marked path for those who sufficiently desire it—is the one hope of mankind for the solution of its problems that we shall escape from the welter of arbitrary opinion.

THE FAITH AND THE CREEDS:  
LETTER TO THE ALUMNI FROM THE FAC-  
ULTY OF THE EPISCOPAL THEOLOGICAL  
SCHOOL AT CAMBRIDGE, MASS.<sup>1</sup>

We hear that many of you want to know how we as a faculty feel in regard to the problems at present before our church.

<sup>1</sup> From *Christian Work*. 116: 150-2. February 2, 1924.

Our first word would be this: Let every thought that Cambridge men utter be constructive. Let every one of us remember that in time of crisis he should show forth the spirit of Christ even more clearly than when all is going well. May we all take the opportunity to seek out those with whom we disagree, and in conversation and conference talk things over with the utmost candor, remembering that we are brothers in one family, assuming that the religious experience of him with whom we talk is as deep and as rich as ours, striving to see that the heart of his conviction and ours may be the same. May we use these days for preaching and living the gospel as never before. While honest in thought and frank in speech, let us be humble in dealing with the mysteries of God. May alumni and faculty unite in this endeavor.

Secondly, let us turn at once to the questions which the publication of the Pastoral Letter has suggested.

The bishops would be the first to assert that they have no canonical authority to define the faith, and therefore, that their message is one of guidance rather than one of command. They themselves spoke of it as a message of reassurance. They have, we are confident, earnestly tried to allay the fears of many who believe that the faith of the church is in danger.

Furthermore, the bishops bear witness to the rich spiritual meaning which underlies a strict construction of certain clauses of the creeds, and particularly that regarding the virgin birth. Although they would not say that the incarnation is dependent upon the method by which our Lord came into the world, they would say that His life plainly points to such a miraculous advent. Men and women have lived, are living, and will live under the comforting assurance that this is a way in which God has revealed Himself to men.

We would at once acknowledge the wealth of such experience. History is filled with it; saints have been made by it; conduct is controlled by it; theories of life



are built upon it. We would deplore the fact that men occasionally have spoken of it lightly. But we regret that others, quite as ardently convinced that the divine and the human are inseparably united in Christ, fully as sincere believers in the incarnation, should have any suspicion cast upon their full membership in our church or on their right of entrance into it. The bishops' letter has cast such suspicion on the membership of those who are unable to affirm belief in the virgin birth as a fact of history.

The problem which the church faces is not one of opening or closing its doors to those of differing attitude toward the creeds. It is rather one of excluding many who are already within it. The church is at present inclusive of varying points of view. Men and women occupying such different positions are at present bound together in the closest bonds of common prayer; they find deep spiritual satisfaction in the same liturgical forms; their worship centers in the Holy Communion as our church administers it; they cherish the same religious ancestry.

The fact that these differences exist within the one body does not release us from the obligation to consider earnestly the foundations of our fellowship and our duty toward the formularies in which they are now expressed. As a Christian church we must share a positive faith which we witness to the world. There must be positive standards of membership and teaching, of worship and discipline. Our existing standards of faith are nowhere closely defined, but clearly include the Bible, the Prayer Book, and the Ordinal. The creeds are but a part of this larger standard. They gain special prominence because they are definite affirmations of faith and because the Apostles' Creed is the expression of faith required at baptism. They are, however, only part of a larger standard, all of which is in force from the strict legal viewpoint. The issues raised by the attitude of some toward the creeds are likewise raised by the atti-



tude of larger sections of the church toward the Bible and by the practice of still other sections of the church in regard to the standards of worship. The strain arising from the use of ancient formularies in days of rapidly changing thought, and the difficulty of giving liberty to the many minds and temperaments within the one body without sacrificing the positive unity of the church, create problems which all of us must face together.

Are we prepared for a rigid, even-handed, legalistic application of the whole standard of doctrine, discipline and worship? Such an application of the standard plainly embodied in the Ordinal would bind us to a view of the Scriptures held strictly by few of the ministers of this church. Presumably, the question in the Ordering of Deacons, "Do you unfeignedly believe all the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament?" means what it says. Likewise, a rigid enforcement of the ordination vows regarding conformity to the worship of this church would straightway stop liturgical and ritual usages, popularly called "high," which correspond with the beliefs and meet the religious needs of a strong section of the church. We believe that this inclusiveness should be increased in order that the Spirit of Christ, using many minds and temperaments, may sift out that in all of us which is true and good and saving. But liberty cannot be given in the application and interpretation of one part of our common standards while it is denied in regard to other parts.

The Pastoral Letter not only selected the creeds from the larger standard of faith and worship as being peculiarly binding, but selected from the creeds certain clauses as requiring literal acceptance, in particular those regarding the virgin birth and the resurrection of the body. With the exception of the obscure clause concerning "the communion of saints," the original meaning of most of the clauses of the creeds is plain. "Born of the Virgin Mary" means exactly what it says, that is, without human father. "He ascended into heaven"

means He *went up* into heaven. "The resurrection of the body" means the raising up again of the flesh. From very early times there have been divergent interpretations of some of these clauses. Throughout the history of the church the more thoughtful have recognized that "heaven" could not be located above the earth, and that an entrance into heaven could not be witnessed. But they have accepted the traditional report of a physical ascent of Christ as in some way symbolical of the spiritual event. There have been divergent interpretations of the "resurrection of the body," which have had their roots and justification in the different views to be found within the New Testament itself. With the passing of the biblical view of the physical universe a large proportion of laity and clergy have found interpretation increasingly necessary. We venture to believe that there are many within the church who could not confidently affirm a bodily ascension, or a visible coming down again of Christ from heaven for judgment, or a raising up again of their flesh, who now express through this ancient medium what they believe to be the underlying religious truths, as, for example, that Christ truly went to God to share in His glory, that in Christ we face our final judge, and that God will bring us after death into eternal life. We are unable to recognize a distinction which would permit interpretation of these other clauses and deny it in the case of the virgin birth. The latter is simply the last of those clauses to which interpretation is applied. All alike are interpretations enforced by a doubt concerning the literal historical facts clearly indicated by the words.

We must respectfully dissent from the statement in the Pastoral that objections to the historicity of the virgin birth "have been abundantly dealt with by the best scholarship of the day." Reverently recognizing its place in the Gospel record and in the tradition of the church, it is our judgment that the historical evidence is emphatically two-sided. For many, probably for most, of

the laity and clergy of this church, belief in the virgin birth is intimately bound up with faith in Christ and the incarnation, and is considered essential to a true appreciation of our Lord. Under such circumstances careless and confident denial would be both dogmatic and inconsiderate. The doubts, however, have been raised by a God-fearing search for truth in history and nature, and cannot be repressed by any official action or by any will to obey. It must be recognized that many honest men and women within the church do not find belief in the virgin birth essential to their whole-hearted faith in Christ and in the incarnation. As such we hold a place within this branch of the church of Christ.

The church is greater than the creeds. The central faith in God as He is found in Christ, upon which the church is built, is not destroyed or diminished by doubts concerning the method of Christ's birth, of His return to God, or of His future judgment. The church made the creeds. The creeds did not make the church. The church was and is a fellowship issuing from the love and power of Christ which has shaped the creeds for its own purposes. What the church has made it can remake. Tradition is still in the making; the inner life of the church is still forcing itself to expression. We do not find the creeds perfectly adequate as expressions of Christian allegiance, as summaries of the Christian view of life, or as tests of discipleship. To leave the church because of dissatisfaction with clauses in the creeds would be to put the creeds above Christ and His church, and to pursue a fruitless sectarianism.

This is not the first time the church has been confronted with changes in its belief, nor the first time it has allowed freedom of interpretation, nor the first time violence seems to have been done to its formularies. The Reformation brought changes in the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, a doctrine which had been established for centuries and which men claimed was found in the Scriptures. The last fifty years have brought changes

in the views of the Bible, a book which has been regarded as the inerrant Word of God from the first centuries until modern times. Without prejudging the issue of the present controversy, we are confident that only the Spirit of Christ, giving us trust in God's truth and love for one another, can guide us to saving wisdom.

In any society, civil or religious, when the formularies in their original intention have ceased to represent the mind of the society or of a large section of it, the alternatives to literal adherence or withdrawal are interpretation and restatement. In the case of the creeds, interpretation is not an attempt to explain away plain historical meanings, but a discovery, in the only language now authorized by the church, of the underlying religious meaning. We believe that a large proportion of the church now finds itself forced to this expedient in the use of various parts of our formularies. We agree with the bishops that such use of language involves serious risk.

All who find themselves forced to the expedient of interpretation are under obligation to work for greater constitutional liberty and for more adequate terms in which to test and express discipleship. Such liberty might be secured by making the use of the creeds permissive instead of obligatory, and in the development of alternative forms to be tested by patient experience. A freedom of this kind would secure the effective use of the creeds by those for whom they rightly have so great religious value without compelling others to whom they present difficulties to subscribe to them in detail or to repeat them on practically every occasion of public worship. As the church throughout the major part of its experience has allowed wide latitude in its forms of liturgical expression, it is possible that it may become stronger and still more catholic if its congregations are allowed a generous range of liturgical freedom.

Finally, we urge that the real ground for anxiety on the part of the whole church is not our divergence over



the things wherein we differ, but our half-heartedness in the religious affirmations that we share. At the foundation of our fellowship and at the heart of the creeds lies the confession of Jesus Christ as Lord, the recognition in Him of very God. Are we prepared to accept in our lives the implications of that confession, to permit Christ to be the Lord of our appetites, the Lord of our relations with our neighbors, the Lord of our family life, of our industrial and business relations? Every man who enters into the religious meaning of the ancient creeds stands upon his feet and joins hands with the great body of Christians throughout the centuries, and says that he believes in God; that he believes in a Righteous Will working in creation; he believes in Christ, the Son of God, the very life and love of God in terms of our human life; he believes in the Spirit, God working within us to draw us to Himself; he believes in the church, the fellowship of those who draw their strength from Christ; he believes in forgiveness, the undiscouraged love of God for us which demands an undiscouraged love for one another; he believes in our victory over death and the life of ever-deepening fellowship. We appeal to our chief pastors to summon us again and again to this faith and to hold us to a strict account in our sworn loyalty to it.

(Signed) <sup>1</sup> HENRY BRADFORD WASHBURN,  
MAX KELLNER,  
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<sup>1</sup> Edward Staples Brown, the only member of the faculty who did not sign, was teaching in St. John's University, Shanghai, China.



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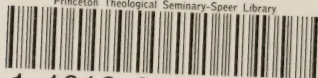
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